

صكرا من الامل



THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,184

FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 1997

WEATHER: Cold

(IR45p) 40p



COMMENT
Suzanne Moore
my resolutions for
the rest of you



THE TABLOID
Face the
new year
in style



Schubert at 200
still better than
the Beatles



After 'Evita', Peron to face dirt-diggers

Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

Madonna's latest starring role means that the international spotlight is once more focused on Evita Peron. Now Evita's husband, Argentina's populist leader General Juan Peron, is also being disinterred.

many Argentines believe his third wife's claim that he was impotent, a court in Buenos Aires has ruled that Ms Holgado might have a point and that a DNA test is in order.

Duarte, alias Evita. Why did it take her so long to come forward? Because her mother, who died only recently, pledged her to secrecy, of course. Nothing to do with the Madonna film.

Peron's death in 1974, the military regime removed his coffin from the presidential burial site and reburied it in another Buenos Aires cemetery.

And no hands ever showed up. Even Evita's body has been a movable object. After Juan Peron had her embalmed in 1952, soldiers smuggled her beautified corpse to Europe. There, somebody cut off her ear as a keepsake. Somebody else took a finger.



Jostling Tories shift on Europe

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The barely-veiled race to succeed John Major as Tory leader if he loses the election was thrown wide open yesterday when Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, broke Cabinet ranks to call for a renegotiation of Britain's relationship with Europe.

want a change of policy, and the rest are waiting for a lead from Mr Major. Mr Dorrell discussed his strategy with Mr Major and had the Prime Minister's tacit backing.



Stephen Dorrell: broke Cabinet ranks on Europe

spokesman, John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, derided it as a "crude effort to outflank Michael Howard in the fight for the Tory leadership".

Mr Dorrell - once a staunch pro-European - refused to be drawn on whether renegotiation would lead to Britain eventually pulling out of Europe, if it failed to win acceptance from the other member states.



Blade runners: Ice-skaters in Cambridge, England, practising for the annual Welney Championships to be held tomorrow. Big chill continues, page 2. Photograph: Keith Dobney

Detective attacks the spin-policemen

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

One of the country's most senior detectives, who is quitting his job to join the private sector, yesterday made a blistering attack on modern policing, accusing it of being more interested in public relations and making people "feel good" than in catching criminals.

including the recovery of Munch's *Scream*, stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo. Now the head of the CID in Belgravia, Mr Hill joins Nordstern, a specialist art and antiques insurance company on Monday as a "risk manager" responsible for intelligence.

"I remain convinced that getting criminals successfully prosecuted is what the police should be doing." He blamed the rise in crime largely on the "nature of society unravelling" and because a growing number of offenders believe that they can get away with it. He admitted that an increase in salary, which he declined to disclose, was also an incentive.

Good Chinese don't love us - Patten

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, has spoken openly of the mixed British legacy, as he prepares to sail out of Hong Kong in six months' time on 1 July.

openly with great public enthusiasm for Britain's contribution and role in Hong Kong. He said in an interview with *The Independent* which was notably free of any flag-waving.

Mr Patten's harshest words were reserved for those who were once bastions of the colonial regime and are now cheerleaders for the new order.

He dismissed the idea that he himself might drop back into a prominent role in British politics when he returns to the UK. "I find the suggestions,

sometimes made, that you can drop in and out of Westminster politics as though the House of Commons was the RAC Club, both politically naive and extremely presumptuous. I don't know whether I want to set my hat at trying to resume a career in party politics and even if I do, I recognise all the problems."

QUICKLY	
'Mass murder' plan	Page 2
Drink-drive fear	Page 3
Indurain retires	Page 28
Hedge victory	Page 4
CONTENTS	
The Broadsheet	
Business & City	20-24
Comment	17-19
Foreign News	10-15
Gazette	16
Home News	2-8
Leading Articles	17
Letters	17
Obituaries	16
Shares	20
Sport	25-28
Unit Trusts	24
The Tabloid	
Arts Reviews	19
Classical Music	16-18
Crossword	22
John Lytle	3
Listings	20, 21
Pop Music	10-15
TV & Radio	23, 24
Weather	22

5 STAR AWARDS

BEST FILM • BEST MUSIC • BEST ACTOR
BEST DIRECTOR • BEST ORIGINAL SONG

"EXQUISITE"
"BRILLIANT"
"MAGNIFICENT"
"TERRIFIC"
"A WINNER"

THE BEST SHOW IN TOWN IS MADONNA

MADONNA ANTONIO BANDERAS JONATHAN PRYCE

EVITA

AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU NOW

9 770851 346450

news



Visitors to the 1997 London International Boat Show at Earls Court yesterday took off their shoes before boarding vessels. The show officially opens today Photograph: Tom Pilton

IRA planned mass murder, say RUC

David McKittrick
Ireland correspondent

The IRA planned to carry out the "mass murder" of police and soldiers with a New Year's Eve bomb attack in north Belfast, the Royal Ulster Constabulary said yesterday.

Police yesterday put on show a 1,000lb device found in a van which had been left in the extensive grounds of a local hostelry, the Belfast Castle. It had been placed inside two "wheelie-bins."

They said the intention was almost certainly to lure the security forces into the grounds and then detonate the device. A bomb of such size, if set off close to a patrol, could have been expected to wreck even an armoured vehicle, killing or seriously injuring those inside.

The plan failed, however, when a member of the public

became suspicious of the vehicle and reported it to the police. The device was defused in a three-day military operation.

The incident is the latest in a series of IRA operations over recent months which have demonstrated that the organisation is intent on killing members of the security forces. A soldier was killed at army headquarters in Lisburn, Co Antrim in early October, but most of the other attacks have, in IRA terms, been failures.

RUC chief superintendent William Davidson said the device had the potential to cause massive casualties, adding: "There were a number of functions at the castle. This is a densely populated area and also an area where large numbers of teenagers frequent, especially at a time like New Year's Eve."

"The potential for dreadful

death and injury with this device doesn't bear thinking about. Anyone would be extremely foolish not to be concerned about the prospects for the coming weeks."

As well as being braced for further IRA attacks, the security forces are also worried about an escalation of loyalist violence. Loyalists have already planted two booby-trap car bombs in recent weeks, and the continuing IRA campaign is generally thought to increase the chances of further loyalist incidents.

Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party, which has links to the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force, said he regarded the loyalist ceasefire to be officially holding, but warned that tensions were growing. He said: "This find proves this is all-out war back again in Northern Ireland, with the

Provos moving to take life. I don't think that loyalists can hold much longer."

"I would be concerned that if the Provos don't draw back from trying to take life then the loyalists will go back completely and there will be no stopping them. I think it's slipping back by the hour. It's very serious."

The series of both republican and loyalist attacks have increased a general sense of foreboding in Belfast and elsewhere. So far as anyone knows there is no communication between republicans and the British government, with the assumption widespread that all sides are doing little more than marking time before the general election.

In the meantime, however, the IRA appears intent on using violence to keep the Irish issue high on the British political agenda.

Long history of mainland attacks

John Crossland

Attempts by the IRA to bomb themselves into peace talks - and for bombers to blow themselves up rather than the target - are nothing new, formerly secret Metropolitan Police papers released yesterday at the Public Record Office reveal.

In the summer of 1921, just as Michael Collins was planning his campaign to wrest independence from Britain, his active service units, whether officially sanctioned or freelance, were using more direct tactics to concentrate Prime Minister Lloyd-George's mind on the coming talks.

They torched the home of a

Royal Irish Constabulary policeman in Tooting, south London, cut telephone wires along the rail lines to the West of England, shot and wounded a railway signalman and burnt his box, and set up a bomb factory with fatal consequences.

On 28 July 1921, a 21-year-old Irishman Michael McInerney, one of Collins's agents ordered, as today over to the mainland to apply pressure for a forthcoming political campaign, blew himself up at a garage in Greenwich, south-east London, which he had rented as a bomb-making factory. He died in hospital from his burns.

An Irishman giving the alias

of James Edwards had rented the garage for 10 shillings a week paid in advance. McInerney, who posed as a mechanic, was one of his team.

In the debris of the garage, firemen found incendiary bombs, two revolvers, part of a Lewis gun and many rounds of ammunition. More importantly, in a burnt wallet, they found a complete formula for constructing incendiary bombs. The notes record: "When black powder is confined there is always a danger of explosion and if the box [drawn with a wick protruding from the top] is merely held in place by tacks there would be a tendency for the whole outfit to blow up."

Cold snap set to last through the weekend

Michael Streeter

Britain looks set for colder temperatures today with the Big Chill lasting at least until Sunday as the row over cold weather payments heated up.

Forecasters predicted that stronger winds from the North-east would cause parts of the country to feel even colder today, with snow flurries in Kent and the east coast causing more problems for motorists.

Meanwhile Harriet Harman, Labour spokeswoman for Social Security, said it was a "scandal" that millions of people were so poor they had to choose between heating and food. She called for improved pensions and for VAT on fuel to be cut from 8 per cent to no more than 5 per cent.

"We shouldn't have so many people who have worked hard all their lives, either out at work or bringing up their children, who then find they retire into poverty."

David Winnick, who led a delegation of Labour MPs to Downing Street calling for change to the way cold-weather payments are made, said their case had been strengthened by the events of the past week.

"It shows the farcical nature of the system that exists that it has taken over a week of very, very cold weather before at long last payments are being made," said Mr Winnick, MP for Walsall North. Labour MP Ann Clywd also called for the wind chill factor to be taken into account when measuring how cold it really is.

Andrew Mitchell, junior So-

cial Security minister, said he was satisfied with the way cold weather payments system operated.

"We have announced that the scheme is triggered today across large parts of the country. A further £8m will be being paid."

Some £19m had been paid out since Christmas, he added. Mr Mitchell said the Government was considering taking the wind chill factor into account, but warned it would not be easy.

Despite the end of the holidays, motoring organisations reported quiet roads as many people stayed at home rather than risk trying to get to work. A spokesman for the Automobile Association said: "Traffic is very, very light and we certainly didn't see anything like a rush hour."

However, for those who did venture out there were problems getting cars started. The RAC said it was receiving up to 3,000 emergency calls an hour yesterday.

The coldest place in Britain on Wednesday night was RAF Benson in Oxfordshire, where a temperature of minus 12°C was recorded.

The warmest place was in the Western Isles of Scotland which enjoyed a balmy 7°C overnight, on a par with Nice.

The London Weather Centre said: "We are not expecting a big thaw in the next few days, and if anything things are going to get colder with snow working its way to the south coast by tonight," a spokeswoman said.

The cold snap claimed another two lives yesterday bringing the death toll to at least 10 since last weekend.

significant shorts

Drug blamed for teenager's death at party

A 16-year-old boy collapsed and died after taking a drug at a New Year party, police said yesterday. Robert Hitchens, from Uppminster, Essex, is believed to have taken ecstasy before collapsing at the David Lloyd Sports Centre, Heston, west London.

He was taken to Ealing Hospital after police were called to the centre at 7.36am on New Year's Day. He died that afternoon. A post-mortem examination is due to take place today.

The teenager's death is the third in recent days thought to have been connected with drugs. In Cardiff, a Muslim teenager who is thought to have taken an Ecstasy tablet, collapsed and died during a huge rave party. And Nicola Edwards, 24, from Middlesbrough, died after being detained by police in Strathclyde.

Lottery cash 'misspent'

Three quarters of people think the National Lottery pays out too much money to a few big causes, according to research published by the Consumers' Association yesterday. Many people also believe lottery cash should be distributed equally throughout the country, said the survey of 2,000 adults.

Which? senior editor Andrew McIlwain said: "The Lottery is undoubtedly a very successful way of raising money for good causes. But a clear national strategy is needed to ensure the cash raised is distributed evenly and fairly."

Mixed-race heartache

Mixed-race couples are regular victims of racial abuse and most often suffer taunts from blacks, it is claimed today. An estimated 40 per cent of black men and 20 per cent of black women have a white partner.

According to *Company* magazine, which published the claims, black men who go out with white women come in for the most flak, because it is feared they then turn their back on black culture.

Interviews with 10 couples revealed they had routinely suffered racist jibes and were often forced to hide their relationship when out in public together.

Grass that's always greener

Scientists at the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research in Wales have developed an "evergreen" grass that refuses to fade in dry conditions, making it easier to maintain golf courses, parks and football pitches.

End of the world is not nigh

Jehovah's Witnesses may breathe a sigh of relief this week. For the end of the world failed to take place for the second time in 20 years.

A growing number of Christian academics believe that Christ was born in 4BC, making 1996, 2,000 years after his birth, the real millennial milestone. But those who agree with Archbishop James Usher, a 17th century archbishop, who believed the world would endure for only 6,000 years, would probably have spent this Christmas cashing in their life insurance policies.

"Archbishop Usher used the *Anno Mundi* calendar, which was a popular way to mark time. According to this, Christ's birth was widely considered to have taken place in year 4,000 of the world, which meant that it would have ended on Wednesday [1 January] at the latest," said Marina Benjamin, whose book on the social significance of millennia and other endings is published later this year. *Jojo Moyes* Leading article, Page 17

Serial rapist fears grow

A suspected serial rapist may have struck again in the spa town of Bath, after a 23-year-old woman was dragged into an alley and indecently assaulted. The attack follows a major police investigation into a series of sex assaults in Bath and the nearby city of Bristol since 1991.

So far they have identified connections between six known incidents - three rapes and two attempted attacks in Bath and one rape in Bristol. It is understood that six further possible cases have been found, although police have not disclosed details.

A team of 60 detectives is also examining the suspected abduction of a 26-year-old woman from a Bath night club last year and the murders of two women from outside clubs in Bristol and Plymouth. *Jason Bennett*

No more tickets to ride

All 28,000 Metropolitan Police officers have had free travel passes withdrawn after the discovery that some were being fraudulently used by their relatives and friends. The abuse of the London Underground passes, which allows free use of tube trains, was discovered by ticket inspectors.

A small number of officers were found to have lent their passes to civilians and continued to use their warrant card, which also gives free travel.

A London Underground spokesman said evidence had been uncovered to suggest that "significant fraud" was taking place. *Jason Bennett*

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	.....Ssn40	Netherlands	.....FIS.00
Belgium	.....BF800	Italy	.....L4,500
Canada	.....\$500	Madagascar	.....Euc235
Cyprus	.....C£11.20	Malta	.....43 cents
Denmark	.....Dw18	Norway	.....Nw620
Irish Rep	.....45p	Portugal	.....Euc325
France	.....Fm4.5	Spain	.....Pis300
Germany	.....Dm1.5	Sweden	.....Stw1.21
Greece	.....Gr150	Switzerland	.....Swh1.00
Luxembourg	.....L460	USA	.....43 no

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ar mail, 13 weeks: Europe £110.75; Zone 1 (Middle East, America, Africa and India) £184.00; Zone 2 (Far East and Australasia) £206.75. To order, please send cheque payable to **The Independent Newspapers Ltd**, 308-310, Great Brunswick Street, London E14 6PU or telephone 0171 338 8288. Credit cards welcome.

BACK ISSUES

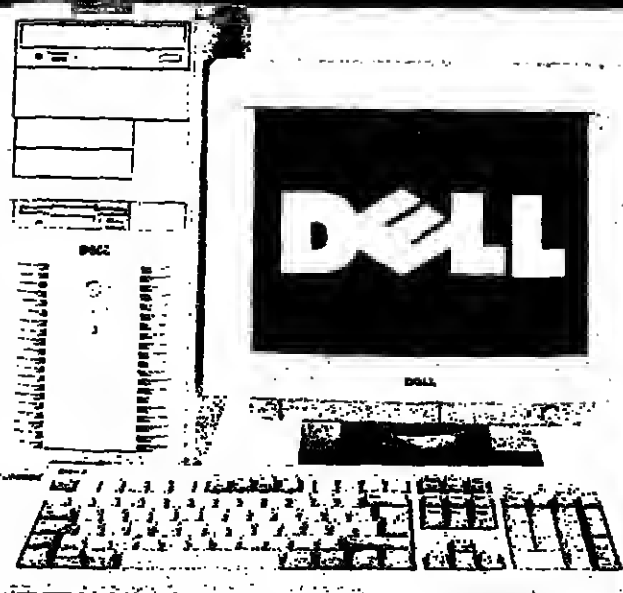
Back issues of the Independent are available from: **Historic Newspapers**, telephone 01283 840570.



Michael Collins: IRA legend

At this price, it's just the business.

New year, new value from Dell. The Dell Dimension™ XPS P133s is the perfect solution to your business. And your budget. With its high performance graphics and sound, this multimedia PC comes with MS Office Professional pre-installed. So the system is ready to run. A 28.8 internal modem allows you to send faxes and could even connect you to the Internet. All in, it's the perfect solution from the world's largest direct PC manufacturer.* Do the business. **call us today on 01344 724689.**



DELL DIMENSION XPS P133s BUSINESS BUNDLE

- INTEL® 133MHz PENTIUM® PROCESSOR
- 16MB SDRAM, INTEL 430VX PCIset
- 512Kb CACHE, 2Gb EIDE HARD DRIVE
- STB POWERGRAPH 64 3D PCI GRAPHICS CARD WITH 2Mb VIDEO MEMORY
- 15" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (13.75" VIEWABLE AREA)
- EIGHT SPEED CO-ROM DRIVE
- INTEGRATED 16-BIT SOUND AND ACS90 SPEAKERS
- MICROSOFT® WINDOWS 95 & MS OFFICE PROFESSIONAL 95
- 28.8 PRE-INSTALLED INTERNAL MODEM

WAS £1,249 (£1,496.95 incl. delivery & VAT)

£1,199 (£1,438.20 incl. delivery & VAT)

DOWN £50
OFFER AVAILABLE UNTIL
8TH JANUARY 1997

DELL®

TALK DIRECT TO THE NUMBER ONE
01344 724689
Between 9am and 8pm weekdays, 10am to 4pm Sat.

Contemporary art is high fashion for first time since sixties as world focus turns to Britain



Super-cool: David Hockney, David Bowie, Howard Hodgkin and Damien Hirst, and works, all exhibitors at the London Contemporary Art Fair, which reflects a new excitement in art

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Art is sexy and hip for the first time since the Sixties. London has ousted New York and Paris as the epicentre of the contemporary art world.

Such assertions have been made before, but this time they seem to be borne out by the facts. The London Contemporary Art Fair, ART 97, which opens on the 15th of this month, is set to become one of the glamour events of the social calendar as well as an economic barometer for the art market.

The art world's style leaders, such as Damien Hirst, the Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon and his fellow short-listed artist Gary Hume, will have works on show, priced at up to £100,000.

But the art fair will also be studied for the rising stars,

including Adam Chodzko, the mixed-media artist who uses photographs sometimes sent to him by members of the public and Liz Arnold, the surrealist who has exhibited at The Saatchi Gallery's Young British Artists shows, as well as names such as Liam Gillick, the installationist, the photographers Susan Derges and Gary Fabian Miller and the painters Maria Chevska and Mark Francis.

A Francis monograph, worth about £400 a year ago, is likely to fetch up to £1,200 at the art fair, one indication of the rising stock of British artists.

Lucy Sicks, director of ART

97, says: "The scene is a particularly exciting one. The whole British art phenomenon has been artist-led, starting famously with Damien Hirst. And now there are young dynamic dealers coming up alongside the young dynamic artists. London galleries such as Robert Prime, Lottahammer and Laurent Delaye have sprung up to show the bright young things."

The glossy style magazine *Harpers & Queen* is hosting a charity gala evening at the fair, and its latest issue declares that art, not comedy as often predicted, is "the new rock 'n' roll".

Supporting evidence is not

hard to find. Hollywood is emulating on a series of art related films with Merchant Ivory's current Picasso biopic with Anthony Hopkins soon to be followed by Malcolm McDowell as Francis Bacon, Michelle Pfeiffer as Georgia O'Keeffe, with Modigliani and Jackson Pollock yet to be cast.

Rock stars are turning to painting, either doing it themselves as in the case of David Bowie (who has joined the editorial board of *Modern Painters* magazine), or commenting upon it, in the case of Jarvis Cocker and the recent television coverage of the Turner Prize.

And when the Princess of Wales dropped most of the societies of which she was patron, she was careful to hang on to London's cutting-edge Serpentine Gallery.

The amorphous group informally led by Damien Hirst and known as Young British Artists may not all be as designer chic as their leader, and their style is far from homogeneous, ranging from Hirst's udderless bovine cross-sections to Rachel Whiteread's cast of a House to Douglas Gordon's video of Hitchcock's *Psycho* slowed down to last 24 hours. But as a group they have

attracted considerable attention in international art shows.

Dealers such as Jay Jopling, who represents Hirst, are said to run their stables of artists in the same high-profile way as the Sixties pop impresario Andrew Loog Oldham once managed the Rolling Stones. Exhibitors such as Jibby Beane no longer just use a traditional art gallery but lease out a Smithfield warehouse with live-performance art models on show among the artworks, reminiscent of a Sixties happening.

And the Young British Artists have grabbed the mood of the moment, just as their

forbears such as David Hockney grabbed the mood of the Sixties. According to the art critic Martin Gayford, who sits on the editorial board of *Modern Painters* with David Bowie, "New York and Germany have been quiescent since the catastrophic collapse of the Eighties art bubble. Right now, for the first time in history, London is the place. The Young British Artists are ironic, super-cool, disengaged, and disenchanted, while simultaneously being fizzy, peppy and energetic ... Where the Pop artists of the Sixties lauded the whizzo excitement of the world of mass

production, the YBAs' focus is on the dinginess of everyday life. Gayford suggests the catch-all label "dinginess with attitude".

For the ninth London Contemporary Art Fair, which runs for five days at the Business Design Centre in Islington, attitude is part of the attraction, glamour another factor, but sales, higher prices and the continuing international kudos of young British talent the *sine qua non*. The organisers are confident of a record year, generating sales in excess of £2m, with 80 galleries taking part. There is a "discovery zone" for new talent-spotting, represented by some of the new breed of Britain's artist-led spaces including The Tannery, Catalyst Arts, Hales Gallery and Calm Gallery — converted factories and railway buildings selling new artists who have not yet graduated to London's Cork Street.

London at the heart of art

Rise in breath-test failures brings call for lower limit

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A growing number of motorists appear to be ignoring the Christmas campaign against drink-driving. Police revealed yesterday that there had been 18 per cent rise in the number of positive breath-tests.

News that 5,209 drivers in England and Wales were arrested, compared with last year's figure of 4,330, brought renewed calls for a new lower "one-pint" limit and tougher police powers to stop motorists.

Figures released by the Association of Chief Police Officers show there were 974 alcohol-related accidents during the Christmas campaign, an increase of 4 per cent over last year's figure of 939.

Paul Manning, secretary of Acpo's traffic committee and an assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said: "Both figures show there is no room for complacency and there are still people prepared to risk the lives of others and themselves by acting irresponsibly."

Mr Manning added that he believed the increase was partly due to the police's new policy of breathalysing every driver involved in an accident. Some of the increase may also be due to a rise in the number of mo-



One for the road: The scarred face of the woman who featured in this year's advertising campaign against drink-driving

torists tested, but police were unable to supply a figure for the total number of tests performed.

Mr Manning dismissed suggestions that the Department of Transport's £1.2m television campaign had been a failure.

The advertisements featured a young woman severely scarred from a road accident caused by her drunken boyfriend. Campaigners point out that many of the hard-core drink-drivers are middle-aged men who are less

likely to be affected by the advertisement.

Among the police forces with the highest increases were Gwent where 117 motorists failed breath tests, compared with 56 last year, but officers tested nearly double the number of drivers. The number of drivers testing positive in Northumbria rose to 181, from 112. Almost one in four of the 672 motorists tested failed.

There was a 20 rise in South Wales, a 35 per cent increase in West Mercia and 15 per cent in Lancashire. In Greater Manchester, there were 361 arrests following positive tests over Christmas and New Year, a rise of more than 7 per cent.

The Metropolitan Police recorded 895 positive tests compared with 650 last year. The number of alcohol-related accidents also rose by nine to 144.

In Merseyside, however, there was a 28 per cent drop in positive tests despite an almost threefold increase in checks to 11,160. Dorset and Gloucestershire also reported a drop.

Glenda Jackson, a shadow transport minister, said that a future Labour government would review the existing laws with a mind to lowering the legal limit from 80mg per 100ml of blood to 50mg — equivalent to about a pint of strong beer.

Sperm counts halve over decade

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

Sperm production by middle-aged men has deteriorated by as much as 50 per cent in the last 10 years and testicles are smaller, according to a study by Finnish scientists which provides further evidence of declining male fertility.

The proportion of men in Finland aged between 35 to 69 with normal spermatogenesis — the production of sperm — fell from about 56 per cent to 27 per cent between 1981 and 1991.

Over the same period there was a significant increase in the number of men with no mature sperm cells, a condition known

as spermatogenic arrest. The incidence of complete spermatogenic arrest rose from 8 per cent to 20 per cent, and of partial spermatogenic arrest from 31 per cent to 48.5 per cent.

The post-mortem study of two groups, one comprising 264 men who died in 1981 and the other of 264 men who died in 1991 showed that the weight of the men's testicles had also diminished over the study period; seminiferous tubes were smaller, and there was increased fibrosis (thickening) of testicular tissue. The mean age of the groups was 53, and there were no significant differences in cause of death between the two groups. More than half

died from diseases and a third died violently or from intoxication (accidents or suicide).

Writing in tomorrow's issue of the *British Medical Journal*, Dr Jarkko Pajarinen from the Department of Forensic Medicine at Helsinki University, and colleagues write: "... the incidence of normal spermatogenesis has decreased significantly among middle-aged men, with a parallel increase in the rate of disorders of spermatogenesis ... between 1981 and 1991. This finding suggests that the quality and dispatch of spermatogenesis are deteriorating in middle-aged men and also confirms earlier presumptions on deteriorating sperma-

togenesis being the main cause of decreasing sperm counts."

Another Scandinavian team first alerted the scientific community in 1992 to declining sperm counts. Professor Niels Skakkebaek at Copenhagen University reviewed studies involving almost 15,000 men between 1938 and 1992 and found the average sperm count had fallen from 113 million per millilitre in 1940 to 66 million in 1990. The definition of a "normal" sperm count fell from 60 million per millilitre to 20 million in the same period. Critics claimed fundamental flaws in the data but two studies in France and Belgium in 1994 confirmed the findings.

The Eurostar January Sale.

31 December – 13 January

Midweek Travel

(Tuesday-Thursday, including Saturday away)

Brussels	was £59	now £49
Lille	was £57	now £49
Calais	was £57	now £39

Midweek Day Trips

(Monday-Thursday, booking 14 days in advance)

Paris	was £69	now £59
Brussels	was £59	now £49
Lille	was £49	now £39
Calais	was £49	now £29

Fares apply to tickets purchased 31 December to 13 January incl. Travel must be taken by 26th March. Subject to terms and availability.



eurostar

0345 30 30 30

or see an appointed travel agent or railway station.

news

Victory for a man who won't hedge his bets

Ruling will safeguard future of ancient hedgerows

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

The man with a credible claim to be Britain's most successful amateur lawyer notched up his latest courtroom victory yesterday, saving a 230-year-old hedgerow from destruction.

Now, both conservationists and the Government must consider the implications of Colin Seymour's triumph – over his local parish council – for safeguarding thousands of miles of hedgerow, dating back to 18th and 19th Century Enclosure Acts.

Mr Seymour, a 63-year-old former teacher, who is partially deaf and lives on invalidity benefit, has won 81 legal battles, mostly involving preserving rights of way and righting environmental wrongs. Big councils and companies have found themselves forced to take remedial actions costing them hundreds of thousands of pounds.

In yesterday's ruling, Judge Tom Cracknell, sitting at Hull

County Court, said that under the 1765 Act, which created the 50 yards of hedge in question Flamborough Parish Council, was still required to maintain it. The council had wanted it destroyed to make room for a green for the village's bowls club.

The judge pointed out: "It is a singularly indistinguishable hedge... very badly maintained, unkempt and straggly." But, he added: "The courts cannot and do not strike down statute merely because it is old and passed by a Parliament that was very far from being elected by universal suffrage."

Mr Seymour, who has lived in the coastal village for six years, said: "I'm delighted with the outcome of this case, but there are always new legal battles to fight and although this hedge is safe, others will have to be fought over."

Conservationists believe that more than 4,000 other enclosure Acts cover a further 40,000 miles of hedges. These statutes ended communal farming and

transformed the English landscape.

But the judge warned: "It would be wrong to read too much into this case in terms of significance for roadside hedges generally... whether a provision is binding has to be judged in each individual case."

Peter Bowler, chairman of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, which has supported the action, said: "It is a great day both for wildlife and countryside landscape in the future because the judgement will give us a stronger arm to protect thousands of miles of hedgerow."

Some villagers are unhappy that their neighbour has scotched the bowling plans. Trevor Pearson, a councillor, said: "The village would not have an entrance to its school, library or village hall if we had not removed other hedges."

And the judge commented: "He [Mr Seymour] may be a hero to some but, to others, I have no doubt that he is the villain of the piece and a thorough nuisance."



Branching out: Colin Seymour with the hedge he saved. Some villagers have been angered by his action

Photograph: Tim Smith/Guzelian

Great notion: A professor of good ideas

Keith Martin

The world's first "professor" of good ideas has been appointed to head a new university department of suggestion schemes.

Geoff Lloyd, a former gas fitter, puts on his gown as a research fellow at the University of Wales on Monday. "The university wants a European centre of excellence to promote the awareness of employee suggestion schemes," said Mr Lloyd, 50. "The unit here is unique."

For once, Britain is ahead of America and Mr Lloyd has been asked to help the University of Central Michigan to set up a similar unit.

The move is part of a revolution in suggestion schemes, of which the estimated 100,000-plus annually in Britain save industry around £500m.

The days of the tin box marked "Suggestion Scheme" hanging in the works canteen and never emptied are passing. Go-ahead companies now tap into employees' cost-cutting brainwaves in a big way.

The new academic's former company, British Gas, has launched a scheme to save up to £300m in its pipeline and storage arm over the next two years, largely from employees' bright ideas.

"There are still firms with the tin box kind of suggestion schemes," said Mr Lloyd, a former chairman of the United Kingdom Association of Suggestion Schemes. "I want to raise the profile of suggestion schemes and show how they can become an important part of problem-solving and a mechanism for change."

As part of Mr Lloyd's PhD in suggestion schemes, he has sent out Britain's first national suggestion scheme survey, to 25,000 people in 240 companies.

asking why suggestions were submitted, or why they were not.

Mr Lloyd, who has written a book on the subject, said his unit would be asking what drove people to make suggestions. "Is it money, recognition by their peers or by their managers, or is it love of the company?"

He will give lectures on the subject to students on MSc and Master of Business Administration courses.

Six best suggestions

■ A Royal Navy commander picked up £25,000 for a fuel-saving idea – called the Harrier ski-jump – for Sea Harriers. Taking off vertically used vast quantities of fuel. The commander suggested the aircraft take off from an angled platform, which is much more fuel efficient.

■ An East London gas stores man suggested bar coding supplies to identify slow-moving items. The payoff was £4.4m in the first year.

■ Swan Vesta save thousands of pounds by applying a factory worker's brainwave to put sandpaper on only one side of each matchbox.

■ A labourer in Bristol called Andy Hitchman gave his name to the Hitchman's swivel in 1993, an attachment that helps lay gas pipe underground. He won £11,000.

■ Someone spotted a way of developing the Post It note when an experiment involving glue went wrong.

■ A British Rail worker, tired of having to replace copper wire on overhead cables, suggested fitting a rayon sleeve over the wire. It is believed to have saved hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr Lloyd, who left British Gas after six years running suggestion schemes, has himself only ever made one suggestion – and he was fobbed off. "The experience turned me into a passionate advocate of how to treat people who submit suggestions," he said.

And the first good idea after hanging up his mortar board behind the door? "I'll put the kettle on," he smiled.

THE HOMEIEBASE SALE NOW ON.

Special Purchase
£19.99

KETER Toolbox
24" Wheeled

DULUX Once Gloss
Pure Brilliant White
2.5 litres
Was £13.49 Save £4.10

£17.99

DULUX
Coloured Emulsion
Matt. Silk or
Soft Sheen 5 litres
Choice of colours
Was £19.99 Save £2

£14.99

MONMOUTH
Outdoor Lantern
Choice of finish
Was £19.99 Save £5

£9.39

TRITON
Ivory 8.5kw
Electric
Shower
Was £99.99
Save £30

£1.29

EDWARDIAN
Pine Spindle
Was £1.99 Save 70p

£19.99

COLONIAL
Textured Moulded
6-Panel Internal Door
78" x 30"
Was £22.99 Save £3

£9.49

CORKFAST
3-2 mm
Self-Adhesive
Cork Floor Tiles
Pack of 9
Was £10.49
Save £1

£44.99

ABRU
Blue Seal
3-way
Ladder
Was £49.99
Save £5

HOMEIEBASE

SAINSBURY'S HOUSE & GARDEN CENTRES

MONDAY-THURSDAY 8AM-8PM • FRIDAY 8AM-9PM • SATURDAY 8AM-8PM • SUNDAY 10AM-4PM • NEW YEAR'S EVE 8AM-6PM • NEW YEAR'S DAY 10AM-6PM!
*Offer ends 14.1.97. Offer excludes taps sold with Wroughton Kitchens. **Offer ends 21.1.97. 15% off all marked prices. All sizes are approximate and not to scale. Merchandise subject to availability. *Stores in Scotland open 9am-6pm. *Stores in Scotland closed New Year's Day. Opening hours may vary. please call 0181-200 0200 for details of your nearest store.

Winter alert: are you paying too much for vehicle rescue?

Before you renew your motoring organisation membership, find out how Green Flag compares. With 6000 mechanics on call, fiercely competitive prices and four levels of cover to choose from.

TO JOIN
CALL FREE ON
0800 00 13 53

Quoting reference C3193

Lines open Monday to Sunday 10am to 6pm

Green Flag
Breakdown repair and recovery

GREEN FLAG IS THE EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR OF THE ENGLAND FOOTBALL TEAM

صكرا من الاميل

Ban on man after Dunblane threat

A prisoner who has allegedly threatened to "do a Dunblane" after his release from jail was yesterday banned by the High Court from entering any council buildings or schools in a south-east London borough.

The emergency injunction won by Greenwich council against 50-year-old David Jennings, which also forbids him to carry firearms or other offensive weapons or interfere with children, teachers and other staff, is effective until a full hearing next Monday at which a permanent court order will be sought.

The council's solicitor, Helen Vautier, said after yesterday's private hearing that the injunction "in no sense pre-judges the result of the full hearing". But if Mr Jennings broke any of its terms, he would be in contempt of court, she said.

This means that Mr Jennings, due for release today, will be at risk of being sent back to jail if he breaches the order.

Yesterday's emergency hearing became necessary after it was learned that Mr Jennings was to be set free four days earlier than expected.

Last month, newspapers reported an allegation that Mr Jennings, a father of 10, had told a chaplain at Highpoint Prison, Suffolk, that he would carry out a "Dunblane massacre" because he was outraged at Greenwich council's treatment of his children in care.

The High Court delayed a decision on the council's initial application for an injunction until next Monday, 24 hours before Mr Jennings, who lives in Eltham within the borough of Greenwich, was due to be released from his 30-month sentence for assault.

But following a review of the time he had spent in custody, it was announced on Tuesday that

he would be released today.

A council spokesman said: "The council and the police have worked closely together to take all necessary steps to review the safety of schools and council buildings in the borough."

"Because of the new year holiday and the unexpected announcement of the impending release, we are seeking the help of the media to ensure people in our community including teachers and parents are informed about what has happened."

Mr Jennings was moved from Highpoint Prison to Elmley jail on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent following his alleged threat and is due to be released after serving about half of his sentence. He has previous convictions for assaulting council officers and possessing a firearm in public.

Yesterday's injunction, granted by Mr Justice Butterfield, bans Mr Jennings from entering any council building or school and from going within a certain distance of some of them; owning or carrying firearms or any other offensive weapon; and interfering with any children, teachers or other staff at the council's schools, or any council employee.

Mr Jennings' solicitor, James Bancroft, said his client would strongly contest the court hearing. The terms of the injunction being sought were "very onerous and extremely severe, meaning he could not live an ordinary life in an area where he has lived for 25 years".

Mr Bancroft added: "He admits saying something similar to the alleged comments, but there was never any intention to make a serious threat. It was just rubbish he spouted while unburdening himself to the prison chaplain because the social services had failed to bring his children to see him."



Safe stalk: A woman walks by a shop-window display of 'white goods' in London, as the MMC is expected to ask for a curb on alleged 'price-fixing'

Photograph: Tom Pilsten

Plug pulled on electrical goods 'price-fixing'

Glenda Cooper

As the annual frenzy of the January sales continues, tough new measures to stop alleged price-fixing of electrical appliances such as washing machines are expected to be recommended by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission this spring.

The MMC is expected to urge the Government to prohibit manufacturers from recommending prices to retailers and is also considering whether to require them to sign a formal undertaking that they will not refuse to supply discount retailers or try to control prices. The *Economist* reports today.

While manufacturers and retailers strenuously deny price-fixing, according to sources close to the MMC, the commission thinks that the consumer has been getting a raw deal when it comes to buying "white goods" such as washing machines, fridges and dishwashers.

The MMC has twice delayed the publication of its inquiry into allegations of price-fixing, but is finally expected to report back this April.

The 1976 Resale Prices Act made price-fixing illegal and also prohibits suppliers from

withholding or threatening to withhold goods or from offering less favourable terms to discount retailers.

Two years ago the Consumers' Association surveyed high-street stores and found that many top-brand electrical goods were being priced identically across the country. When the association telephoned a range of stores, several said that they would lose their dealership if

they offered a discount on the recommended retail price. A leading chain store in Slough said: "The prices you see in the stores are set by the manufacturer". Another said: "It's difficult to do discounts as manufacturers exert pressure on shops not to".

A recent survey for the BBC's *Panorama* programme found that identical video recorders were priced at £479.99 in 17 out

of 22 stores, refrigerators at £249.99 in 16 out of 19 stores, and washing machines at £429.99 at ten out of eleven stores.

In 1994 the combined market share of five retail chains selling domestic electrical appliances was 42 per cent. It is alleged that retailers who step out of line are punished by exclusion. Jim Murphy, the managing director of Price Costco, a warehouse membership club which charges at

least 20 per cent less than high-street outlets, told *The Economist* that excuses given by manufacturers for refusing to trade with him ranged from the environment being wrong to his staff not being trained in how the product works. "The current system does not encourage... efficient distribution to the consumer," he said.

Richard Hyman, of the retail analysts Verdict, said that claims

of conspiracy between retailers and manufacturers should be treated with caution: "It is not quite as it seems. It is not meeting in smoke-filled rooms... it isn't that overt."

But he added that the argument that customer service would not be good enough in warehouse outlets was not correct: "If the consumer thinks it's OK to buy from there then it should be."

Film maker keeps options open on Fred West rights

Clare Garner

A film version of the life of Cromwell Street mass murderer Fred West may still be made for television. The independent production company which has bought up the memoirs admitted yesterday that it had not ruled out exploiting the rights in future.

While there are no immediate plans to develop a film based on West's confession-tapes, memoirs and blue-movie videos, the Portman Entertainment Group has not ruled out the possibility of a television film or mini-series.

In a statement, John Banks, chairman of Portman, said yesterday that the rights were just one of many projects in the

pipeline of the company which produced the television mini-series *A Woman of Substance*, was involved in financing the Hugh Grant film *An Awfully Big Adventure*, and acquired the British rights to *Home and Away*.

"A production company of Portman's size will acquire a considerable number of rights to material or stories during the course of a year, only a tiny number of which result in completed productions," said Mr Banks.

"When and if the topic comes before the board of Portman for full consideration, the sensitivity of the subject matter will, of course, be taken into account. It could only have been done in collaboration with a broadcaster - the BBC were originally interested - so the approach

would have had to have been very sensitive."

The £12,000 film-rights deal was brokered by Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor whose task it is to maximise the financial return on the West estate. But the deal has led to a review of the law governing the duties of the Official Solicitor by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay.

Gary Streeter, Minister at the Lord Chancellor's Office, said the Official Solicitor had done nothing wrong in law, but the review had been announced because of public concern. He said that when he and the Lord Chancellor heard the news about the film rights being sold "we both felt this cannot be right... and therefore we need to urgently review the score".

Can
Lloyds Bank
customers
use TSB cash
machines?

Yes.

That's use of an extra 1,890 cash machines free of charge. So now you are even closer to your money.



THE THOROUGHRED BANK.

Lloyds Bank Plc, PO Box 112, Canary Wharf, London E14 9YB

NOW DAEWOO GIVE YOU EVEN
MORE AS STANDARD:
THREE YEARS FREE INSURANCE.

Buy any new Daewoo and we'll give you three years comprehensive insurance. Free. What's more, we're the only car manufacturer to do this. Add this to the peace of mind of a 3 year comprehensive warranty, 3 years

free servicing, including parts and labour and



DAEWOO

3 years Daewoo Total AA cover and you really don't have any motoring worries.

Insurance is available to customers aged between

18 and 80 who have a

current full or provisional UK driving licence. It will

cover the car's owner and another named driver.

This applies to social, domestic, pleasure and

business use by the policy

holder and the other named driver. Over 3 years

you can build up a 50% no claims bonus.

Without spending a penny. Even company

fleet cars are covered. And if 3 years

free insurance isn't enough, you also

get the rest of Daewoo's package

as standard. Just read the Daewoo

Manifesto. The 3, 4 and 5 door

Nexia and the Espero saloon

range from just £9,445 to £13,735.

All in, it makes for a smarter driver.

For more information on Daewoo,

or to find your nearest Daewoo

showroom, call us free on

0800 666 222. Or write to

Daewoo Cars Ltd,

FREEPOST, PO Box 401,

Kent BR5 1BR.



DAEWOO MANIFESTO

1. We deal direct

More for your money as standard on every Daewoo model:

Electronic ABS Side impact protection
Drivers airbag Mass life point
Power steering Mobile phone
Engine immobiliser
Security glass cutting

2. Hassle free buying

No commission commission Number plates included
Fixed pricing Full tank of fuel
No hidden charges 12 months road tax included
Delivery included

3. Complete peace of mind

3 year 60,000 mile comprehensive warranty
3 year 60,000 mile free servicing including parts and labour
3 years free comprehensive insurance Subject to excess
3 year Daewoo Total AA Cover
3 year anti-rust corrosion warranty
30 day 1,000 mile money back exchange guarantee

4. Courtesy servicing

Free courtesy car offered
Pick up and return of your car (Mainland UK only)

Three years free insurance?

That'll be the

Daewoo driver.

Nicholas Schenck



Gillian Shephard

Profile: Aged 56, Secretary of State for Education and Employment – a Majorette ready to show the men a thing or two.
Campaign strategy: the Joan of Arc of the Cabinet, fighting Ken Clarke for more money for schools; Major over his demands for more grammar schools.
Form: doughy fighter with no realistic chance of winning. But they said that about Thatcher.
Odds – 100:1.

against the former minister Mr Redwood and backbench Eurosceptics who were putting their principles above the party's election chances. Mr Redwood has since gone relatively quiet... But the ground is moving under the Chancellor who is becoming more isolated in the Cabinet. Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, has stood by the Chancellor, but also has his own eye on the leadership election. Mr Major is

Small wonder, then, that so many MPs are reluctant to leave. Ten sitting MPs, seven Conservative, two Labour and one the Tory defector Alan Howarth, are still looking for new seats either because they have not been reselected or because their seats are disappearing in boundary changes.

There are also many who wish to return to the fold. Among the new Conservative intake next spring will be three senior figures who lost their seats in 1992. Michael Fallon, former education minister, will return as member for Sevenoaks in Kent. John Maples, former deputy chairman, will take up Mr Howarth's Stratford-on-Avon seat and Francis Maude, former trade, Foreign Office and Treasury minister, will become the member for Horsham in Sussex.

reading on 14 January. A government source said the odds against Labour defeating the Government on it, and forcing an election, were 4:1. Enough perhaps for a flutter bet.

**LOW COST
INSTALLATION
AVAILABLE**

MFI

MFI homework

صبرنا من الازل

Tide turns at last on Britain's dirty beaches

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

The United Kingdom's resort beaches are becoming cleaner and better managed, giving the great British seaside holiday a better than ever chance of reviving, according to the Tidy Britain Group.

Having carefully surveyed 139 beaches last August, the height of the holiday season, the group sees unmistakable signs of improvement.

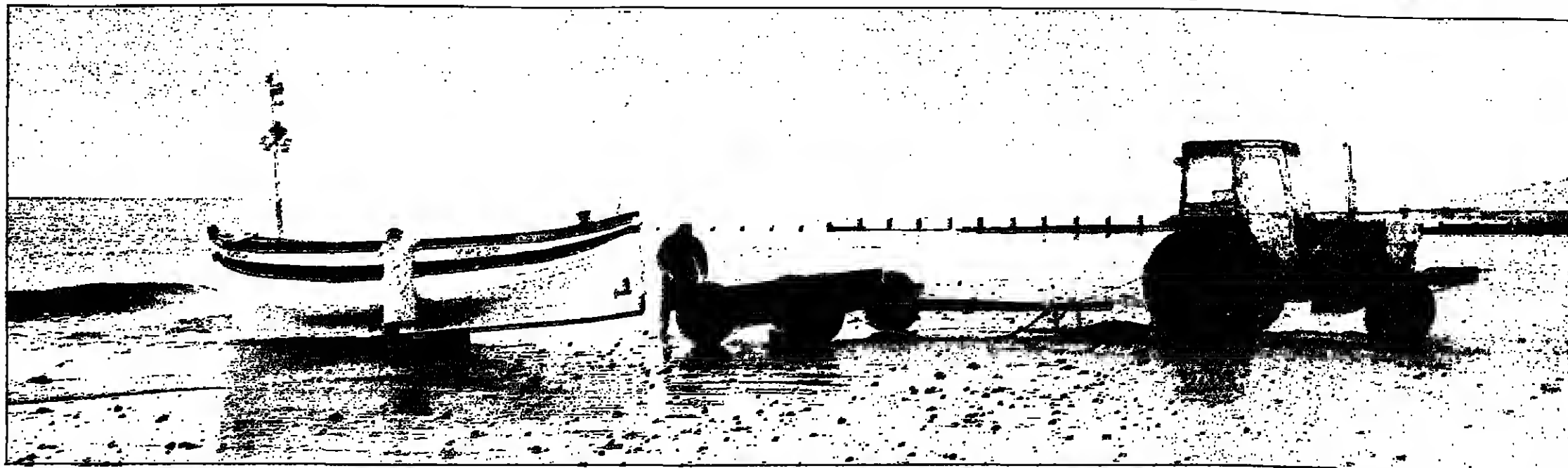
Its inspectors graded beaches as A, B, C or D based on how well they scored in access, cleanliness and litter control on shore, safety in the water, control of dogs, facilities and recreation, maintenance and public information. Grades C and D were deemed "unsatisfactory".

A grade A was given to 41 beaches, of which Bournemouth's are the most popular. Brighton was a B and Blackpool's north and south beaches were Cs.

Eleven resorts – 8 per cent – were assessed as grade D, including Southport on Merseyside. East Anglia had the cleanest beaches and the most improved ones, while the North-west was the region with the worst. None of its beaches had a grade A.

Trevor Dickson, who headed the survey, said it showed a big improvement on 1995. Ten more resorts had achieved a grade A and two-thirds of all the beaches inspected were either in that category or grade B.

"We're encouraged," he said. "We feel the findings of earlier surveys have been well received by the local councils



Getting fresh: Cromer beach in Norfolk won a grade A from the Tidy Britain Group and also meets basic EU standards. East Anglia's beaches were the cleanest in the survey

Photograph: Bryn Colton

responsible for the beaches and we can now see a real improvement."

The survey did not cover the amount of sewage pollution in the bathing water – although to score well resorts had to provide prominent notice boards giving this information to the public.

The Government released the latest figures on sewage pollution a few weeks ago. They showed that in 1996 89.6 per cent of Britain's 472 designated bathing waters met the minimum, mandatory European Union standard – a minuscule improvement on the 89.0 per cent pass rate in 1995.

The tiny increase disap-

pointed the water industry and the Government, because since privatisation about £2bn has been sent on coastal sewage schemes, largely to comply with an EU directive setting maxi-

mum sewage bacteria levels. The water companies now say there are other sources of sewage pollution such as buildings with their own sewage outfalls and farms.

Blackpool central and north beaches met the EU's basic standard for the first time this year, thanks to a £150m improvement scheme. But the resort's south beach still failed.

Mr Dickson said sewage pollution in water had been given undue weight over the cleanliness and good management of beaches on shore. "Our surveys find that the great majority of

people go to the beach to sunbathe, enjoy the fresh air and views and to walk, not to go in the water," he said.

Nonetheless, 31 United Kingdom beaches had now been

awarded the European Blue Flag, nearly twice the number for 1995. The flag is given to beaches that are clean and well run on shore and whose water meets the most stringent EU standard.

Bathing at its best

The following 13 beaches were judged Grade A in the Tidy Britain Group's onshore survey, but they also have European Blue Flags, which means they meet the European Union's highest bathing-water quality standard.

England: Sheringham, Norfolk; Southwold, Suffolk; Sheerness Beach Street and Leysdown Grove Avenue in Kent; Bournemouth, Poole Sandbanks and Swanage Central in Dorset; Oddcombe, Devon; Sennen

Cova and Porthmeor St Ives in Cornwall.

Scotland: St Andrews West Sands; Aberdour Silver Sands. Wales: Pembrey Country Park, Tenby North.

Small holiday firms offer best deals

Glenda Cooper

People are more happy with their holidays if they book through small specialist tour operators, while some of the largest names are among the worst in delivering customer satisfaction.

According to a survey of 11,500 Consumers' Association members for *Holiday Which?* the high street giants Airtours, First Choice and Inspirations came bottom of more than 50 tour operators.

The small independents Swiss Travel Service and VFB Holidays were the most popular. Value for money was not only about cost, said holiday-makers. They rated some top names, who tend to be cheaper, lower down the league.

Thomson, which owns the companies through which 60 per cent of all package holidays are booked, beat its two main rivals for customer satisfaction. About 48 per cent of its customers would recommend the company, compared to 28 per cent for First Choice and 25 per cent for Airtours.

Accommodation was often a source of dissatisfaction: one in 14 readers thought standards could have been better. And while three-quarters who travelled with Swiss Travel Service, P&O Cruises, Style and Hayes & Jarvis were satisfied with Airtours, First Choice, Sunworld, Cosmos and Skytours.

The survey also found that one in seven people were unhappy with their holiday representative, and in the worst cases the figure rose to one in five. One in 25 felt they had been misled by brochures.

For long-haul travel, Virgin Holidays remains the favourite, followed by Travelsphere, Titan HiTours and Kuoni. Airtours, Unjet, First Choice and Thomson trailed.

Patricia Yates, editor of *Holiday Which?*, said: "These results show again that your choice of tour operator is just as crucial as your choice of resort and you are more likely to get a holiday that matches your expectations if you stick to an independent tour operator."

But Airtours accused *Holiday Which?* of "applying pop science to holidays". It argued that the people that responded to the survey represented 0.03 per cent of holidaymakers who choose to travel with the company.

Despite tragedies such as the Lockerbie bombing, many countries have not introduced legislation requiring screening of all hold baggage on international flights, said *Holiday Which?* About 8,000 unaccompanied bags find their way onto international flights every year. The UK, however, is leading the way in airport technology. Ten of the world's 25 CTX5000 screening machines, used to detect plastic explosives, are installed in Manchester Airport.

DAILY POEM

The Butter-Print

By Seamus Heaney

Who carved on the butter-print's round open face
A cross-hatched head of rye, all jags and bristles?
Why should soft butter bear that sharp device
As if its breast were scored with slivered glass?

When I was small I swallowed an awn of rye.
My throat was like standing crop probed by a scythe.
I felt the edge slide and the point stick deep
Until, when I coughed and coughed and coughed it up,

My breathing came down-cold, so clear and sudden
I might have been inhaling air from heaven
Where healed and martyred Agatha stares down
At the relic knife as I stared at the awn.

This poem comes from Seamus Heaney's new volume *The Spirit Level* (Faber), which appears on the shortlist for the TS Eliot Prize and is Heaney's first collection for five years. In the intervening period, he has served as Professor of Poetry at Oxford and published his lectures there as *The Redress of Poetry* (Faber). Last year, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

FIAT EASIPLAN REPAYMENTS

Cash Price (on the road)	£11,723.98	23 Monthly Payments	£129.00
Deposit	£4,103.98	Final Payment	£5,037.40
Amount Financed	£7,620.00	APR	4.4%
Term	25 Months	Interest Charged	£513.40
First Payment (inc 260 admin fee)	£189.00	Total Payable	£12,297.38

ELECTRIC SUNROOF ■ DRIVER'S AIRBAG

CENTRAL LOCKING ■ SPLIT REAR SEAT

POWER STEERING ■ IMMOBILISER

ELECTRIC FRONT WINDOWS ■ BODY COLOURED BUMPERS

No word of a lie, you can now buy the luxury-laden Fiat Brava 1.4SX for a smidgen under £130 a month (plus deposit and final payment).

To prove we're not pulling your leg, pull out your finger and call us on 0800 71 7000. Or try <http://www.fiat.com> on the Internet for more information.

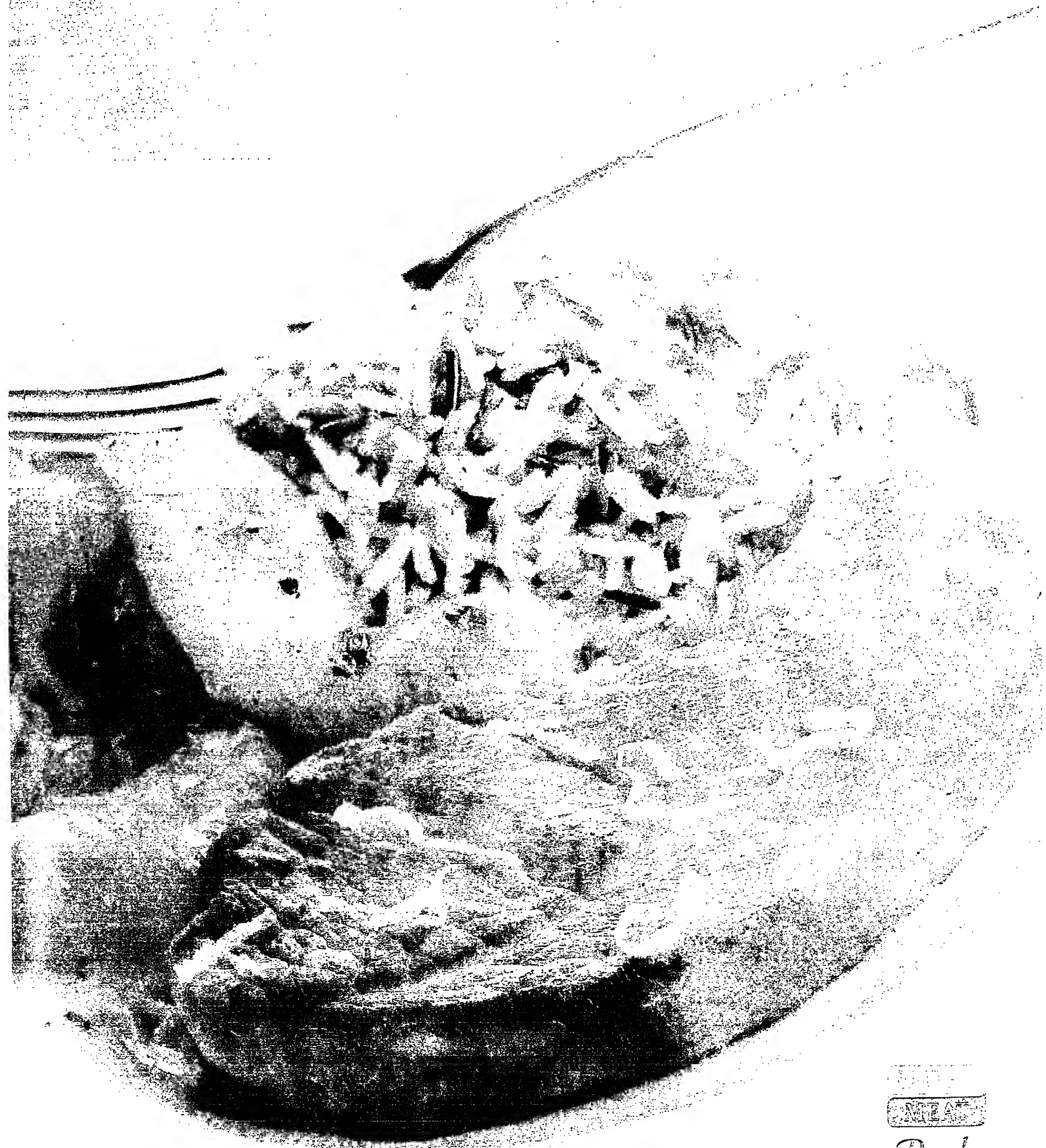
DRIVEN BY PASSION **FIAT**

CAR SHOWN FIAT BRAVA 1.4SX AT £11,723.98 (ON-THE-ROAD). PRICE INCLUDES 12% FOR DELIVERY TO DEALER, NUMBER PLATES, VEDT AND 6 MONTHS ROAD FUND LICENCE AND IS CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS 26/12/96. OFFER ENDS 31/12/97. CREDIT AVAILABLE TO ANYONE AGED 18 OR OVER SUBJECT TO STATUS. A GUARANTEE MAY BE REQUIRED. WRITTEN QUOTATIONS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM FIAT MOTOR FINANCE, 3 PRINCESS WAY, RED HILL, SURREY RH1 1NP. FIAT MOTOR FINANCE IS A PART OF THE LOMBARD GROUP.

GUINNESS

ieed by
upils

s-style
er jobs



MEAT

Pork

THE HONG KONG HANDOVER

The colony's last tango dancer



Old order and the new: Hong Kong's last governor, Chris Patten, stands outside his residence against a background of gleaming skyscrapers

As the countdown begins, Governor

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Chris Patten, the 28th and last Governor of Hong Kong, is, to put it mildly, in a feisty mood. With only six months to go before he sails out of the colony on the royal yacht *Britannia*, he has the appearance of a man with nothing to lose and who has a few things that he would like to get off his chest.

Some of his critics would say that Mr Patten has gone out of his way to provoke opposition, especially during the last few months.

"It's not an argument one can win", he objects. "If you do nothing, you're washing your hands of Hong Kong; if you try to do it yourself, you're grandstanding. I've spent half my time in Hong Kong with people accusing Britain, and I suppose me, of selling out Hong Kong to British commercial interests and the other half dealing with people who say we should have sold out Hong Kong to commercial interests. Neither of which is true."

The recent introduction of legislation on subversion, which has taken place right at the end of colonial rule, has excited Chinese fury and a promise by Peking that the new law will be repealed. So, is he merely grandstanding in order to make Britain look good?

Mr Patten insists that Britain tried to secure the Chinese government's agreement but could not, and therefore was compelled unilaterally to draft a law that it had pledged to bring onto the statute books. He says that even if the legislation does not survive "we've at least established

a benchmark against which anything else can be judged".

Mr Patten was appointed in 1992 as the last Governor of Hong Kong, just after winning a General Election for the Conservative Party leader John Major but losing his own seat.

The appointment was seen as a rejection of the "old China hands" in the Foreign Office and Cabinet Office who sometimes appeared to be ready to mollify Peking at almost any cost.

Although he maintained the colony's "executive-led" government, he outraged both the Chinese government and the business and professional elite in Hong Kong by giving ordinary people a greater say in the running of the territory.

Mr Patten went as far as he could, within the bounds set by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong, to make the 1995 Legislative Council election the freest in the colony's history.

However, that was too far for China, which has chosen its own provisional council to replace the legislature as soon as it gains control in July.

It has also ensured that Mr Patten's term as Governor has been punctuated by a constant stream of abuse from China. In fact, he relishes some of the more colourful epithets that have been thrown his way, mockingly referring to himself as "the tango dancer" or "the triple violator".

But China's hostility has also meant that obstacles have been put in the way of several crucial projects, such as the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

Humiliating history feeds an obsession with race

Teresa Poole
Peking

"The Chinese people have stood up and will finally wash away a century of national disgrace." Thus does China anticipate the return of Hong Kong to "the motherland", an event which will purge "a national shame that cannot be forgotten". According to nationalist propaganda, 1997 marks the end of the country's "humiliation" by foreign powers. "When China becomes strong, nobody in the world will dare to bully us," a Chinese Communist Party magazine thundered recently.

The image of mainland China, humbled by foreign powers over 150 years and now reasserting itself, is one which requires constant reminders of past "humiliations" in order to inspire present-day patriotism.

Professor Lucian Pye, a Sinologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argues: "It is a xenophobic nationalism, one

tors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force."

Frank Dikötter, of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, points out: "Chinese nationalism has been based on ideas of descent. The Yellow Emperor was a significant founding myth in Chinese nationalism at the beginning of this century, today references are more often made to Peking Man and other archaeological findings that are claimed to indicate that the Chinese have separate origins from the rest of mankind."

Mr Dikötter, author of a book on nationalism in China to be published next year, adds: "One does not become Chinese like one becomes Swiss or Dutch, since cultural integration (language) or political adoption (passport) are both excluded as means of becoming 'Chinese'."

This narrow definition has been keenly felt by Indian and Pakistani families in Hong Kong, many of whom have been resident for generations, but will not qualify for post-1997 Hong Kong passports because they are not ethnic Chinese.

Ethnicity is entwined with a tendency always to blame foreign countries. Patriotic instruction in China today dwells at length on the wrongs of the 19th century, the "Unequal Treaties" with Britain and the Japanese occupation. As part of the 1 July celebrations this year, a lavish mainland film, *The Opium Wars*, will have its premiere in China and Hong Kong.

China's obsession with historical injustice paradoxically may be linked to the fact that it was never truly colonised, unlike India and Indonesia. Mr Pye explained: "The treaty ports were a Chinese invention to keep the 'barbarian' cooped up. But the humiliation was that the Chinese flocked to the treaty ports, and prospered."

There is a parallel with Hong Kong, and China's threats against the British to open the border - enabling eager mainlanders to flood into the colony. "Today you have more talk in China about the 150 years of foreign humiliation than in India, Indonesia, or Burma, for example. They have all been able to grow out of this, but China is somehow clinging to it," says Mr Pye.

The basis for a mature nationalism has fallen foul of political upheavals. Mr Pye argues: "You have had 40 years of the Chinese Communist Party denouncing as an abomination all that was great in Chinese civilisation. And now they turn round and wonder, what have we got left? Where are our ideals, where are our values? And there aren't any, except for a sort of racist instinct."

Mr Pye has little doubt about China's response if the Hong Kong transition does not go smoothly. "They will have to find scapegoats - and it will be

Dixons
SALE
NOW ONSAVE UP TO £100
ON AUDIOSAVE UP TO £100
ON TV & VIDEO
PACKAGESUP TO 18
MONTHS INTEREST
FREE CREDIT ON
SELECTED
PRODUCTS

VIDEOS - SAVE UP TO A TOTAL OF £60

MATSUI VXA100
LONG PLAY VIDEO
Was £249.99Panasonic NVSD2008
LONG PLAY VIDEO WITH
VIDEOPLUS
Was £249.99SANYO VHR776
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D605
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEOGRUNDIG GV607
LONG PLAY VIDEO WITH
VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £229.99MATSUI VP9601
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
● VideoPlus with PDC.
● Long play/record facility. ● Autotune facility.
● Superb NICAM digital stereo sound.
Was £269.99. In-store Price £249.99.

One voucher per purchase. Not for use with other offers. Offer ends Thursday 7th January 1997. Branch use only - discount using code 4 (Head Office offer).

SAVE A TOTAL OF £40
9 MONTHS INTEREST
FREE OPTION*

SAVE A TOTAL OF £229.99

SAVE UP TO £40
ON PORTABLE
CD SYSTEMSPLUS EXTRA SAVINGS
ON MANAGERS' SPECIALS AND
CLEARANCE ITEMS - CHECK
YOUR LOCAL STORE FOR DETAILSSONY
SLVET7
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
● Long play/record facility.
● VideoPlus with PDC.
Was £449.99. In-store Price £389.99.AIWA HVF2000
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
Was £449.99. In-store Price £389.99.GRUNDIG GV607
GV607 4-HEAD NICAM
STEREO VIDEO In-store Price £229.99
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*JVC FRA 830
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
WITH VIDEOPLUS In-store Price £329.99
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-D680
4-HEAD NICAM STEREO
VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
In-store Price £349.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*LARGE SCREEN/PORTABLE TV's
SAVE UP TO A TOTAL OF £200HITACHI 14MT
14" PORTABLE TV WITH FASTTEXT
24cm visible screen size.
In-store Price £269.99SONY 14MH
14" REMOTE CONTROL TV
24cm visible screen size.
In-store Price £269.99SONY KV40T1
20" PORTABLE TV WITH FASTTEXT
34cm visible screen size.
Was £249.99. In-store Price £209.99GRUNDIG T51720
20" TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
48cm visible screen size.
Was £299.99. In-store Price £209.99GoldStar ALU30
14" COMBINED TV AND VIDEO
24cm visible screen size.
Was £299.99. In-store Price £209.99MATSUI 25M1
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTTEXT
50cm visible screen size. Was £399.99. In-store Price £359.99Panasonic 25MD1
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTTEXT
50cm visible screen size.
In-store Price £359.99HITACHI 2566
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTTEXT
50cm visible screen size. Was £429.99. In-store Price £389.99SONY 25F1
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTTEXT
50cm visible screen size. Was £499.99. In-store Price £459.99TOSHIBA 2852
28" NICAM STEREO TV
WITH FASTTEXT
56cm visible screen size.
Was £549.99. In-store Price £489.99

One voucher per purchase. Not for use with other offers. Offer ends Thursday 7th January 1997. Branch use only - discount using code 4 (Head Office offer).

SAVE A TOTAL OF £70
18 MONTHS INTEREST
FREE OPTION*JVC 26ET1
26" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
51cm visible screen size.
PLUS SURE-LOW-NOISE PLAY VIDEO
WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
Was £599.99. In-store Price £529.99PLUS
2000 HOURS PLAY VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS
Total Separate Selling Price £549.99

CANCORDER - SAVE UP TO £120

JVC GRAX 480
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
44x HYPERZOOM
Remote control.
Was £599.99. In-store Price £479.99Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*Panasonic NV-R33
VHS-C CAMCORDER WITH
10x POWER ZOOM Was £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*TOSHIBA 2857
28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC
SURROUND SOUND TV
66cm visible screen
size. Was £899.99.
In-store Price £799.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST
FREE OPTION*Panasonic 28AD2P
28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC
SURROUND SOUND TV
66cm visible screen size.
Was £999.99. In-store Price £799.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*MATSUI 20VT
20" TELETEXT TV WITH
REMOTE CONTROL
40cm visible screen size. Was £229.99GRUNDIG ST 5525
21" NICAM STEREO
TV WITH FASTTEXT
42cm visible screen size.
● Black matrix picture tube.
● 59 channels and 2x PAL
● 100% digital circuit.
Was £329.99. In-store Price £279.99

SAVE A TOTAL OF £50

TV/VIDEO PACKAGES
SAVE UP TO £100SONY 21M
21" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
41cm visible screen size.
PLUS SURE-LOW-NOISE PLAY VIDEO
WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
Was £599.99. In-store Price £499.99MATSUI 28M1
28" NICAM STEREO TV
WITH FASTTEXT
56cm visible screen size.
PLUS VIDEO HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
Was £599.99. In-store Price £499.99TV/VIDEO PACKAGE - SAVE £50
WITH THIS VOUCHERSHARP 51AT15
21" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
41cm visible screen size.
PLUS VIDEO HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
Was £599.99. In-store Price £549.99

One voucher per purchase. Not for use with other offers. Offer ends Thursday 7th January 1997. Branch use only - discount using code 4 (Head Office offer).

PERSONAL CD HI-FI - SAVE £20

Panasonic
SL188
PERSONAL CD PLAYER
● Extra bass system.
● 24 track memory.
DOXORS DEAL
£79.99MATSUI 51AT15
21" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
41cm visible screen size.
PLUS SURE-LOW-NOISE PLAY VIDEO
WITH VIDEOPLUS AND PDC
Was £599.99. In-store Price £499.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SANYO 51AT15
21" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
41cm visible screen size.
PLUS VIDEO HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
Was £599.99. In-store Price £499.99SONY 51AT15
21" FASTEST TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL
41cm visible screen size.
PLUS VIDEO HEAD NICAM STEREO VIDEO
Was £599.99. In-store Price £499.99Technics SLX140
PERSONAL CD PLAYER
In-store Price £79.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99SONY D151
D151
Includes remote control.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £179.99prep
Patten defends B

As the countdown begins, Governor

PORTABLE C

SAVYO
KCS-1553
PORTABLE CD
SYSTEM
VOUCHER
£99.99

صوتنا من الداخل

cer prepares to take the final bow

Patten defends Britain's flawed legacy

He believes that most people "found here a refuge which was characterised by the decency and freedoms of British civil society, and even though only in the last decade has Hong Kong started to see democratic development, it's been for many years one of the freest societies in Asia. Britain has provided the infrastructure within which Chinese entrepreneurial genius and hard work could flower and flourish."

So what will he be doing for the next six months? It has been suggested that as a lame-duck head of government, he might as well stay at home and put his feet up. Yet his diary is packed and he seems determined to oversee the completion of his social and educational programmes.

"I have been committed to the issue of the protection of civil liberties and democratic development but I've set out a whole range of other social and economic items on the agenda which I have tried to ensure are implemented. Sometimes, as a consequence, I've been rather curiously described as a Socialist."

Never the less, he is realistic. "It would be ludicrous for me not to recognise that the last six months is the last six months. I mean, people aren't going to be looking to me for reassurance about the future as they are going to be looking to C.H.," he says, referring to his Peking-designated successor, C.H. Tung.

The Governor says he gets on well with Mr Tung personally. "We've worked together while disagreeing," he says, referring to the time that his successor spent as a member of his cabinet.

Aside from the personal relationship, "we're going to have to minimise rather than maximise the difficulties". Among the difficulties is China's establishment of a puppet legislature to rival the existing Legislative Council. "If the provisional legislature is given a great raft of things to do before 1 July 1997, it will be just aggravating a problem deliberately for political reasons," he asserts, perhaps suggesting that the difficulties will not be inconsiderable.

Mr Patten will not be offering advice to his successor unless asked. He is very well aware that any hint of endorsement from himself will be taken in Peking as a black mark against Mr Tung. His advice includes the suggestion that "the democrats need to be involved with governing and running Hong Kong". This sort of talk is heresy in Peking's ruling circles.

And what of his own future? "I find the suggestions, sometimes made, that you can drop in and out of Westminster politics as though the House of Commons was the RAC Club, both politically naive and extremely presumptuous. I don't know whether I want to set my hat at trying to resume a career in party politics and even if I do, I recognise all the problems." Meanwhile he will be retiring to France and writing a book about Asia, "which I've got to get out of my system".

He will be leaving the luxuries of a large staff at Government House to tend his garden, to learn how to use his computer and get that book written. It is hard not to believe that he is ticking off the days.

Leading article, page 17



Democracy in danger: Police restrain activists outside the inaugural meeting of the selection committee choosing Hong Kong's first Peking-appointed ruler

Question marks hanging over the future

What will happen to the British connection with Hong Kong - will it simply end on 1 July 1997?

No. The government insists that Britain has a residual responsibility, in part as a signatory to the treaty under which Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule and in part because a Sino-British Joint Liaison Group, responsible for transitional issues, will remain in operation until 1 January 2000.

What happens to the Queen's head on stamps and coins?

All royal insignia will go: the Queen's head has already gone from new coins. Red letter boxes with the royal crest will be phased out and in will come the Bauhinia symbol, drawn from Hong Kong's national flower. It is a sterile hybrid which produces no seed.

What about all the institutions designated as royal?

With the exception of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, all other royal-named bodies, including the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, are rushing to drop the honour like a bad smell.

Will British-related monuments and road names remain?

Problematic. The Brits have named almost every road after a British functionary. China has said nothing about changing these names, but in neighbouring Portuguese Macau, China has insisted on the removal of "colonial" statues.

What about the old colonial buildings?

What old colonial buildings? Commerce has taken its toll on most of them. Chris Patten joked that the Governor's house would be turned into a museum of colonialism. At any rate Tung Chee-hwa, Mr Patten's successor, does not want to live there.

Will any British armed forces stay in Hong Kong?

The garrison will wind down in the next few months. The rest will have to be out of the colony immediately after the handover. They will probably be put aboard vessels accompanying HMS Britannia out of Hong Kong.

Will Britons still have the right to visit Hong Kong?

Brits will still be allowed in without a visa but will no longer be free to work or study. Like other foreigners they will have to obtain special permits.

What about British passport holders in Hong Kong?

Those of non-Chinese origin will simply be treated as foreigners. Ethnic Chinese holders of UK passports will not be recognised as British citizens by the Chinese government but will be regarded as Chinese citizens.

Will there be freedom of speech and of the media?

In theory, this is guaranteed under the Basic Law; but senior Chinese officials have warned there will be no freedom to criticise the Chinese government, advocate independence, or criticise individual leaders.

And the legal system?

This, too, is supposed to remain unchanged, right down to the use of wigs and flowing robes. Understandably, the Chinese language will get a bigger airing in the courts. The real problem is the independence of the judiciary. China has reserved the right to have the last say on determining basic constitutional issues and has limited the autonomy of the court of final appeal.

A lease no one thought would run out

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Considering that China could have taken Hong Kong back at any time and that Britain has long been a reluctant colonial power in its last major overseas territory, why is the colony reverting to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July 1997?

In formal terms the answer lies in the second Convention of Peking, signed on 9 June 1898. The ailing Qing Dynasty leased the New Territories to Britain for 99 years, starting 1 July 1898. The new additions were to make up 90 per cent of Hong Kong's land mass. The term of 99 years was fixed almost casually. Both sides believed the new lands would remain British for ever, along with the original colonial possession of Hong Kong island, acquired in 1842. The British empire would never die.

The lease was signed in the midst of a flurry of European colonial expansion in China. Britain did not want to be left out, but it was prepared to let China's rulers save face by not insisting the territory should be ceded in perpetuity.

As early as 1909 Governor Sir Frederick Lugard suggested the New Territories be ceded permanently to Britain as a condition for the return of the British concession of Weihaiwei to China. In the event, Weihaiwei was returned to China in 1930, without any of the conditions suggested by Sir Frederick two decades previously.

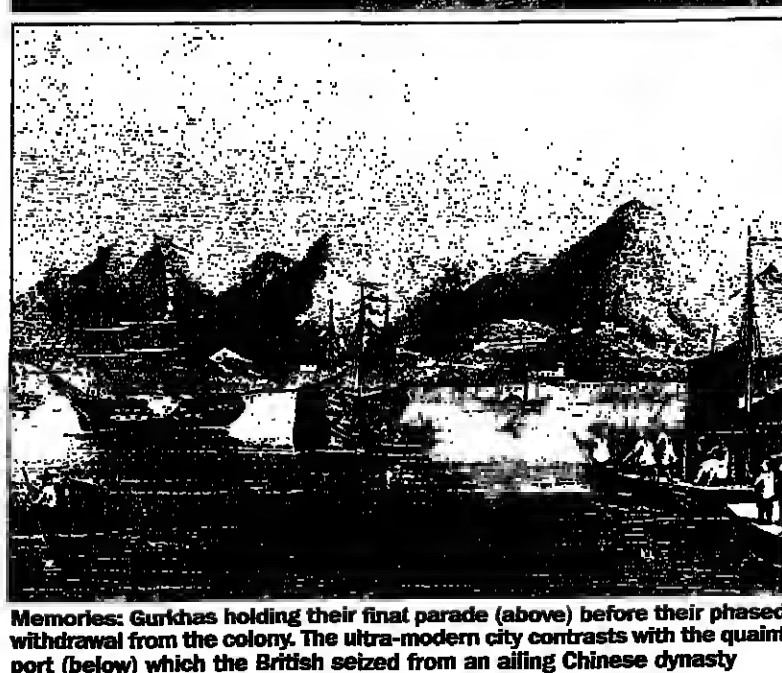
When the Qing Dynasty fell and the nationalist government was installed, it declared it would not accept the "unequal treaties" that gave Hong Kong to Britain. The nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, with the support of the United States, put pressure on Britain to hand Hong Kong back after the Second World War but Churchill would have none of it.

After the Chinese Revolution, the leaders in Peking had to deal more pressing business than the recovery of Hong Kong. Indeed the territory's existence as a British colony had its uses in providing the Chinese mainland with a window on the rest of the world.

It was not until the mid-1970s that China and Britain started to think about the future of Hong Kong's colonial status. Formally China insisted that it would only take Hong Kong back "when the time is right". It suited China to turn a blind eye to the reality of British sovereignty, while stating that it did not accept the colonial status quo.

It is likely that the Communist Party decided to resume sovereignty following the expiry of the New Territories lease in 1976-7. However the decision was only made known to Britain in March 1979, during a visit to Peking by Sir Murray (now Lord) Maclehoose, the Governor. Britain was careful not to let this decision be known and China also kept quiet about it. Some thought had been given to the idea that Britain might maintain its presence in the portion of the colony that was ceded in perpetuity. In the end, Hong Kong without the New Territories was not considered a viable option.

By 1982 negotiations for the return of Hong Kong were effectively under way. Two years of tough bargaining followed, leading to the signing of a Sino-British Joint Declaration under which Britain would withdraw from Hong Kong on July 1 1997.



Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from the colony. The ultra-modern city contrasts with the quaint port (below) which the British seized from an ailing Chinese dynasty

Memories: Gurkhas holding their final parade (above) before their phased withdrawal from

Serbian church leaders turn on Milosevic

Andrew Gumbel
Belgrade

The Serbian Orthodox Church, once an ardent supporter of President Slobodan Milosevic's nationalist ambitions in the Balkans, yesterday added its voice to the groundswell of public opinion turning against the government with a withering attack on what it called a "Communist, Godless and Satanic" regime.

An unambiguous statement of support for the anti-government protests, now into their eighth week, was read out at the regular afternoon opposition rally in central Belgrade to a rapturous reception.

"He [Milosevic] has already

set up against the whole world and now he wants to pit us against each other and trigger bloodshed in order to preserve power," said the statement, was drawn up by the Church's governing Synod at an emergency session earlier in the day and signed by Patriarch Pavle.

The Church has had its share of problems with Mr Milosevic because his government refused to return property confiscated by Tito's Communists in 1945 and failed to encourage the growth of religious schools. But in the run-up to the 1991-95 war it threw its weight behind Mr Milosevic's expansionist ambitions, seeing the dream of a Greater Serbia as an opportunity for an Orthodox revival.

Yesterday's statement was still nationalist in tone, accusing Mr Milosevic of betraying Serbs in Bosnia and the Krajina region now reconquered by Croatia. But it was a significant indication of the way in which public opinion is moving away from Mr Milosevic. In recent days, scores of judges, university professors and other prominent officials have come out openly in favour of the anti-government protests.

On New Year's Day, the Writers' Union, which initially applauded Mr Milosevic in the 1980s, issued a fierce attack saying the president was the "enemy of Serbia". The union has revived its famous "protest evenings" — originally estab-



Man of the people: Serb opposition leader Vuk Draskovic surrounded by supporters at anti-government rally in Belgrade

Photograph: Reuters

lished to bring together dissidents of Tito's regime.

On the streets of Belgrade, tens of thousands of people again turned up yesterday to repeat the demands they have

been making since late November: for Mr Milosevic to acknowledge the victory scored by the opposition coalition Zajedno [Together] in elections for city councils across the country.

Although the numbers were relatively modest, partly because of the bitter ice and cold and partly because of a menacing presence of armed riot police a few streets away from

Republic Square, the focus of rallies and protesters was infused with a new spirit of optimism. Opposition political parties hoped that Mr Milosevic was on the verge of accepting the results of an inquiry by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) into the local elections and grant the opposition the victories it has been claiming. Mr Milosevic had been due to respond to the OSCE survey by yesterday, but it is now believed he will make a statement today or on Monday.

He has shrouded himself in silence in recent days, permitting no reference to the demonstrations either in his own communiqués or on state media. His New Year message to the nation referred only to his intention of liberalising the

economy in an effort to pull the country out of a deep slump exacerbated by war and four-and-a-half years of international sanctions that have yet to be completely lifted.

While Mr Milosevic's message was broadcast, hundreds of thousands of Belgraders thronged into the streets in their hundreds of thousands — an unmistakable political statement despite the overtly festive motive for the gathering.

Yesterday, the atmosphere remained good-humoured, with demonstrators cheering, setting off firecrackers and blowing through brightly coloured party whistles, while loudspeakers blasted out the frenetic, wildly energetic gypsy music from *Underground*, Emir Kusturica's prize-winning film about the wars in Yugoslavia.

Muslim and Serb homes torched

Sarajevo (Reuters) — Nato reported yesterday that at least a dozen houses formerly inhabited by Bosnian Muslims or Serbs were destroyed over the past week in a Croat-held area near Mostar.

The attacks were clearly aimed at discouraging non-Croat refugees from returning to settlements south of Mostar, human rights workers said.

Five houses once inhabited by Muslims were destroyed in Stolac on Sunday night and another house was torched on Monday, said Major Tony White, spokesman for the Nato-led peace force.

Three houses in nearby Kuvac were also destroyed on Sunday, two homes belonging to Serbs were razed in Stolac at

the weekend and explosions had damaged a house in the village of Prebilovic on Monday, Major White said.

The reports coincide with an alarming rise in expulsions of Muslims from Croat-controlled western Mostar over the past three months.

Groups of armed men have been systematically evicting the remaining Muslims from western Mostar and seizing their flats, according to United Nations relief workers and international police monitors.

Mostar is strictly divided into Croat and Muslim sectors since a 10-month Muslim-Croat war ended in 1994. Croat authorities have failed to put a stop to the expulsions despite repeated pleas from Western diplomats.

Huge losses in Albania savings fraud

Miranda Vickers
Tirana

Almost everybody in Albania has queued up in recent months, in the hope of gaining a share of the goodies. Now, however, huge numbers — one in seven families, according to some estimates — face financial ruin, pending the collapse of the country's plethora of pyramid-savings schemes.

Already one company is on the verge of collapse, with thousands of desperate people besieging its office in central Tirana and demanding their promised interest returns. When no payouts were forthcoming, angry crowds smashed the windows of the company's office before they were dispersed by police.

Albania has been in the grip of investment fever, with companies borrowing money from people and paying them extraordinary high monthly interest rates, ranging from 8 per cent to a literally unbelievable 35 per cent. The pyramid schemes rely on a stream of new deposits to pay out interest on the old ones, and this requires an ever-increasing flow of cash.

The World Bank and the IMF have called on the government to exert strict control over the pyramid schemes. Meanwhile, however, almost every Albanian family has invested some money in one pyramid scheme or another. Over the last few months, gullible investors have queued from the early hours of the morning to deposit their savings. Many have even sold their homes to invest as large a sum as possible.

The schemes are a powerful magnet, providing a glimmer of hope in a country with an average monthly wage of only £55 and high unemployment.

"It is worth taking the risk," said one stallholder, Arben Shekriu, whose brother has sold his flat and moved his family back into the parental home. "We will all be able to share the money earned from my brother's deposit," he said hopefully.

In the centre of Tirana, the office of Vefa Holdings, the largest and most powerful of the money-lending schemes, shoots beams of white light over the rooftops, a symbol of the brash new capitalism pervading Albania's post-communist society. Vefa, which is thought to have attracted around £50m, offers investors monthly interest rates of 8 per cent on six-month deposits.

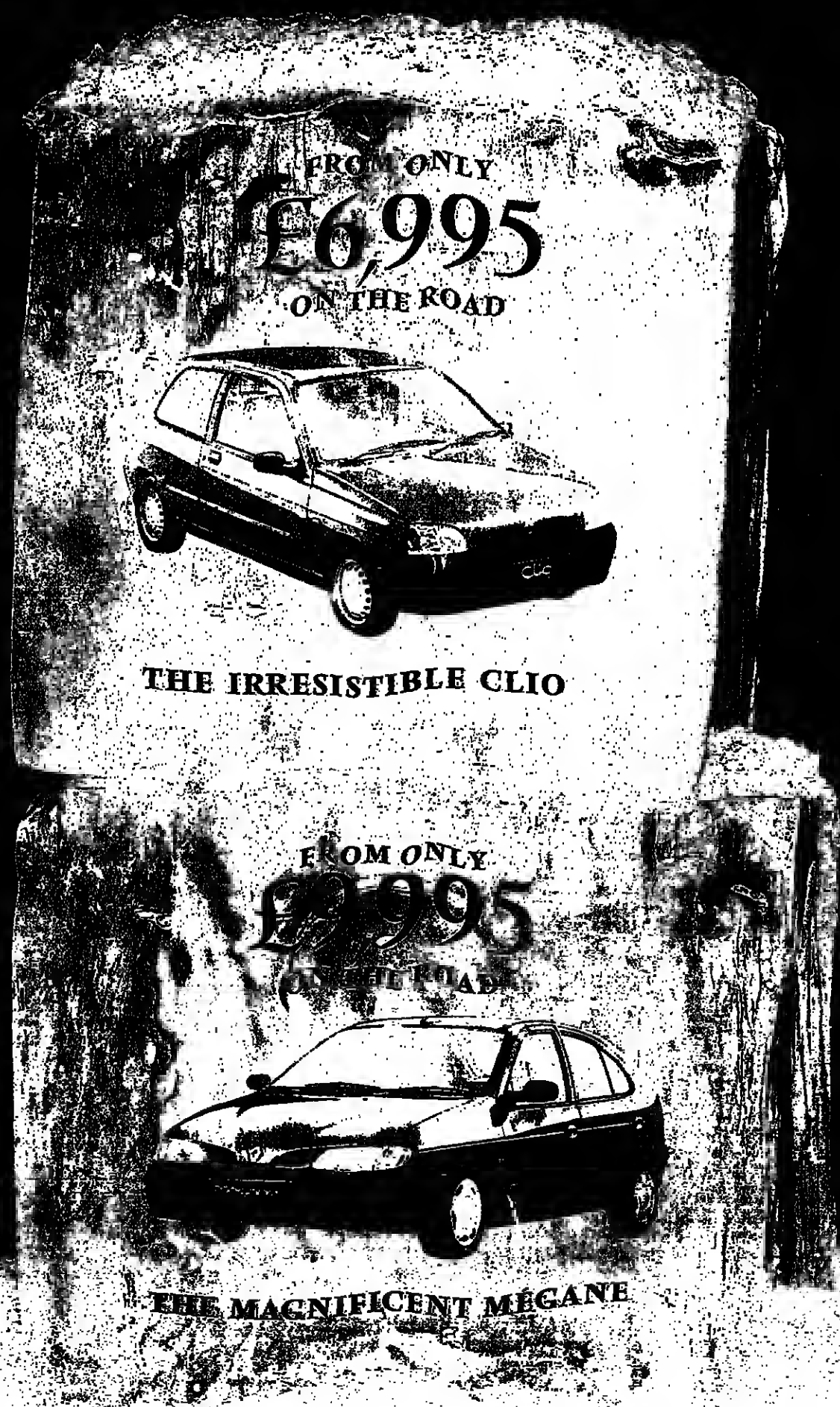
Interest rates jumped sharply following a statement by the Finance Minister, Ridvan Bode, warning of the potential catastrophe facing Albania should the schemes collapse. He cast doubt on the ability of the pyramid firms to return the sums deposited with them and to continue to pay out such high interest rates.

The statement, however, only fuelled the various schemes' competitiveness, and several firms immediately increased their interest rates. One firm reduced the permitted withdrawal period from seven to three months and trebled the rate of return, another announced that all deposits lodged with it would earn 32 per cent in just 55 days.

Despite growing speculation that these money schemes will not be able to pay out to savers, Albanians continue to stand patiently, awaiting their turn to lodge their precious savings.

"We are like lambs to the slaughter," said economic analyst Albert Marku, despondently watching yet another queue.

FROZEN UNTIL JANUARY 15.



Why be left out in the cold? Take your pick from the stunning Clio and Mégane ranges now — and slip in ahead of the New Year price rise.

CALL 0800 52 51 50 FOR YOUR NEAREST RENAULT DEALER

RENAULT
CARS
WITH FLAIR

صوتنا من الداخل

Doctors warned against arming Arabs' attacker

Eric Silver
Jerusalem

The Israeli army conscripted Noam Friedman, the religious soldier who shot seven Arabs in Hebron on Wednesday, despite a written warning from psychiatrists in his home town that he should not be trusted with a gun.

The religious newspaper, *Yom Hashishi*, yesterday published extracts from a letter sent to the draft board by his local education office in May 1995.

"It should be considered seriously whether to draft this man," his counsellors wrote, "and especially whether to place a weapon in his hands." Friedman was reported to have boasted afterwards that he had tricked the army into taking him. "Now," the paper quoted him as saying, "they will give me a weapon to shoot Arabs."

Friedman, 19, was remanded in custody yesterday. Police also charged a second soldier, Yuval Jilil, 1, with complicity in the shooting. Friedman told the court that he had wanted to show that the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, did not represent the Israeli people. He said he felt compelled to act to stop the gov-

ernment handing over most of Hebron to the Palestinians.

Unlike Yigal Amir, who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the Hebron mosque killer Baruch Goldstein, Friedman has been repudiated even by the Israeli right. He was too much of a loner, too obviously a psychiatric case.

"I don't expect him to become a cultural hero," Ehud Sprinzak, a Hebrew University expert on Israel's radical right, said. "There is a consensus within the settlements that he damaged their cause."

None the less, commentators pinned some of the responsibility on the religious right. "Even if the man acted on his own," wrote

'Bomb was Israeli'

Damascus (Agencies) — Syria said Israeli agents planted a bomb on a bus in Damascus on New Year's Eve, killing nine people and wounding others.

At least 40 people were taken to hospital. The attack followed attacks on Syrians in Lebanon, where right-wing Christians strongly oppose Syrian control over their government.

Nahum Barnea in the mass-circulation *Yedioth Aharnot*, "without orders from rabbis or politicians, the extreme right cannot be exempt from blame. In all sectors of this country, there are lunatics, but in only one sector do they turn weapons into a tool of politics."

The final negotiations for a Hebron redeployment were marking time last night. The Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, met until 3am yesterday, but failed to reach a consensus that would enable Mr Netanyahu and the Palestinian leader to meet and initial an agreement. It will probably have to wait over the weekend.

The main difference is over the timetable for further Israeli withdrawals — from West Bank rural areas — once the Hebron pull-out is completed. The Palestinians want Israel to keep to the original schedule, under which the evacuations were supposed to have started last September and finished in September 1997. Israel contends that the clock should restart from where it was stopped by last year's Islamist suicide bombings.

David Bar-Ilan, Mr Netanyahu's media adviser, last night accused the Palestinians of stalling.



Old enmity: An elderly Palestinian argues with Rabbi Moshe Levinger, one of the most prominent Jewish settlers in Hebron, in the market area of the town where Noam Friedman shot seven Arabs. Photograph: Reuters

Delays that made history repeat itself in West Bank

It has happened before. Two years ago, Baruch Goldstein, an army reserve captain from the Israeli settlement at Kiryat Arba overlooking Hebron killed 29 Palestinians as they prayed in the al-Ibrahimi mosque in the city. This week, Noam Friedman, another West Bank settler serving in the army, opened fire in Hebron's vegetable market 30 yards from where Goldstein carried out his massacre.

The Oslo Accord, purported an agreement designed to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians, made such atrocities inevitable. It left more than 100,000 settlers in place on the West Bank, the hard core of whom said from the beginning that they would do everything they could to prevent Israeli withdrawal from any part of what they regarded as the land God gave to the Jews.

Oslo also encouraged attacks because it envisaged a long time-frame for its implementation — six years from its signing in 1993 to the end of final status negotiations in 1999. The justification for this was that resistance to such radical change could be less if it took place in ages. In practice, it gave plenty of time for opponents of Oslo, both Israeli and Palestinian, to derail it by bomb or bullet.

The nine months' delay in the

Ambiguities in the Oslo Accord have allowed extremists to flourish, writes Patrick Cockburn

Jerusalem, is 1.3 million. Of these, around 300,000 passed from Israeli security control when its forces withdrew from six towns at the end of 1995.

An Israeli redeployment in Hebron will mean a further 100,000 Palestinians will gain autonomy. The real change comes when Israeli forces withdraw from the Palestinian villages in rural areas where a further 900,000 Palestinians live. Under Oslo II this was meant to occur over 18 months, starting earlier this year. Until this happens, Israel will still be in a position to isolate each of the autonomous towns, creating the cantons Palestinians have always feared.

Professor Khalil Shikaki, a leading Palestinian political scientist, says: "Following the three further redeployments, the Israelis should be out of every part of the West Bank except Jerusalem as defined by its municipal boundaries, settlements as defined by their current areas and specific military locations". In other words, around 85 to 90 per cent of the West Bank would be in Palestinian hands. The interim agreement also opens up a right of passage between the 800,000 Palestinians in Gaza and those of the West Bank.

The addition of Hebron to the six other autonomous towns is important for Palestinians but not the central reason why they signed the interim agreement. The economic life of each can be strangled by an internal closure by Israel, which often means no more than putting checkpoints on the main access roads. The Palestinians also fear that if Mr Netanyahu persuades the US and the rest of the world that he has made major concessions over Hebron, international pressure on Israel to implement Oslo will relax.

Not everything can be blamed on Mr Netanyahu and his government. Mr Rabin was ambivalent about what Oslo really meant. He signed an agreement withdrawing Israeli troops from populated areas, but at the same time pushed ahead with the construction of a system of "by-pass" roads, designed to divert the West Bank more closely to Israel. The ambiguities in Oslo, designed to marginalise opposition, ended up offending everyone. The settlers saw an end to their dreams of taking over the Biblical land of Israel. Palestinians found themselves forced into impoverished ghettos. In a world of disappointed hopes, gunmen like Friedman were bound to flourish.



Baruch Goldstein: Murdered 29 Palestinians at prayer

implementation of the so-called interim agreement or Oslo II signed by Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and the previous Israeli government last year, has been portrayed as yet, has been largely about the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron. This withdrawal, which is a partition of the city, and not on the rest of the interim agreement, which would see an end to Israeli predominance on the West Bank.

The redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron alone will not upset the balance of power on the West Bank. This will happen only when Israel carries out its three-stage withdrawal from rural areas as it is pledged to do under Oslo II. It is this that Mr Netanyahu has been raving to avoid.

The Palestinian population of the West Bank, excluding East

SOFTWARE BONANZA AT TOYS 'R' US

ATTENTION ALL NEW PC OWNERS!

RED ALERT £29.97	GRAND PRIX 2 £29.97	FIFA '97 £29.99	TOMB RAIDER £29.99	ENCARTA '97 £44.97
CREATURES £29.99	TOTAL INSANITY £34.99	FLIGHT SIMULATOR £39.97	DISC WORLD 2 £34.99	

OUTSTANDING VALUE MULTIPACKS

ALADDIN	LION KING	JUNGLE BOOK	CD-ROM DORLING KINDERSLEY EDUCATIONAL TWIN PACK
ONLY £34.99			

TOYS 'R' US ...SOFTWARE MEGACENTRES WITH 1000'S OF TITLES!

LONDON AREA HAYES (Hoyes Lane) (A312), 2 miles north of Heathrow ENFIELD (Great Cambridge Road) (A10) CROYDON (Croydon Road) (A24) THURROCK (Chesham Road) (A132) BARNET (Gospel Oak Road) (A100) BARNET (Gospel Oak Road) (A100) BARNET (Gospel Oak Road) (A100)	POOLE/BOURNEMOUTH Dorset Way READING (Reading Road) READING (Reading Road) SOUTHAMPTON (City Centre) EAST ANGLIA IPSWICH (A146) (A146) IPSWICH (A146) (A146) IPSWICH (A146) (A146)	SCOTLAND GLASGOW (Glasgow Road) GLASGOW (Glasgow Road) GLASGOW (Glasgow Road) GLASGOW (Glasgow Road) GLASGOW (Glasgow Road) GLASGOW (Glasgow Road)	WILKS & WEST SWINDON (A4130) SWINDON (A4130) SWINDON (A4130) SWINDON (A4130) SWINDON (A4130) SWINDON (A4130)
---	---	---	---

ALL STORES OPEN MON - SAT 'TIL 8PM* SUN 11 'TIL 5pm* *Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee SUN 10 'TIL 6pm

PLAYSTATION WITH 5 GAME PACK ONLY £269

PLAYSTATION WITH 5 GAMES	TRUE PINBALL	WORMS	DOOM	PANDEMONIUM	XZ
---------------------------------	---------------------	--------------	-------------	--------------------	-----------

FIFA '97 £43.97	FORMULA 1 £43.97	PANDEMONIUM £38.97
SOVIET STRIKE £43.97	CRASH BANDICOOT £43.97	COMMAND & CONQUER £43.97
TOMB RAIDER £43.97	WIPPOUT 2097 £43.97	TEKKEN 2 £43.97
DIE HARD TRILOGY £43.97	MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY £43.97	DISRUPTOR £43.97

BUY NOW PAY JUNE '97 WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £200 WITH EASYBUY (20% deposit required)

VIEW THE NEW TOYS 'R' US INTERNET CATALOGUE ON: http://www.toysrus.co.uk	LOW PRICE GUARANTEE WE'LL MATCH ANY ADVERTISED PRICE
---	--

*Some stores open 'til 7pm Saturday. Please check locally for details.

international

Fujimori plans assault to free Lima hostages

Phil Davison
Lima

The Peruvian President, Alberto Fujimori, furious over daily propaganda coups by Marxist guerrillas occupying the Japanese ambassador's residence, is said to be studying detailed plans to attack the building in an effort to free 74 remaining hostages.

Sources close to the President said he had received advice from the United States and other foreign military advisers on how best to carry out an assault. But the sources stressed that an assault was "only one option, a serious one but the President is still hoping for a peaceful solution".

Peruvian commandos have been practising an assault on a mock-up of the Japanese diplomatic compound at a secret location, the sources said. They said an assault would probably last only three minutes if successful, but that casualties among the hostages would be high.

In only his second statement since the crisis began on 17 December, Mr Fujimori yesterday described the hostage drama as an isolated incident and sought to soothe investors' concerns. Showing no sign of backing down on the guerrillas' demands for the release of 400 jailed comrades, he again described the guerrillas as "terrorists", something they have angrily denied.

The 20 or so guerrillas of the Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement (MRTA) freed a further seven hostages on New Year's day, leaving them with 74 captives including the President's brother Pedro, cabinet ministers, senior police and military officers, congressmen, two am-



Fujimori: Angry at rebels' propaganda coups

bassadors and Peruvian and Japanese businessmen.

The freed men were four Japanese businessmen and three Peruvian government officials, including Juan Assereto, a key adviser to the President on privatising state industries.

The seven walked out with one of Peru's leading Catholic churchmen, Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani of Ayacucho. Although he has said his visits to the building were pastoral, he appears to have won the release of many of the nearly 500 hostages freed over the past two weeks.

Despite the latest release, there was no sign of an early end to the 16-day-old occupation which began when the rebels stormed a diplomatic cocktail party. The MRTA yesterday issued a statement saying the ball was now in Mr Fujimori's court.

"We call on all the progressive men and women of the world to keep demanding that the Peruvian government come to a peaceful solution that will lead to the freedom of the political prisoners and the prisoners of war [the hostages] taken by our commando unit," said the statement, datelined "somewhere in the central jungle".

"Now it is the Peruvian government's turn to speak."

Mr Fujimori was said to have been particularly angered by an impromptu press conference given by MRTA leader, Nestor Cerpa, inside the building on New Year's eve.

A group of reporters had been allowed through police cordons to film the door of the residence when a Japanese photographer broke from the group and approached the building holding up a sign saying "Kyodo", the name of his Japanese news agency.

The other journalists followed and Cerpa, his face covered by a bandanna, held a news conference, haranguing Mr Fujimori's "dictatorship".



Long vigil: Women praying for the release of the remaining 74 hostages held in the Japanese ambassador's residence, Lima Photograph: Reuters

significant shorts

US to put up barriers to BSE

The United States is set to announce steps to guard against any outbreak of BSE, or mad-cow disease, amongst its cattle herds.

In the next few days, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to issue a ban on the recycling of waste protein from cows, sheep and other ruminants into animal feed. Scientists believe that mad-cow disease was first allowed to spread when remains of sheep infected with scrapie, a disease closely related to BSE, was fed to cattle.

The US has so far escaped the disease which has led to the mass slaughter of Britain's herds. There has been a US ban on imports of British beef since 1985 and on live cattle imports from Britain since 1989.

David Osborne - New York

Spies put to death in Libya

Libya yesterday executed six senior officers and two civilians convicted of spying using equipment supplied by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Libyan state-run radio reported.

Reporting the convictions by Libya's Supreme Military Court on Wednesday, the state-controlled Libya television said: "The agents... supplied agents of foreign governments with information relating to the country's defence secrets, for espionage purposes, by exploiting their membership of the Libyan army."

AP/Reuters - Cairo

Alone in a lift on NY Eve

No one likes to be alone on New Year's eve, or on New Year's day, and especially if they are stuck in a lift.

Hui Chow-fong, a meter reader for Hongkong Electric Holdings Ltd, spent the holidays alone in a lift where he was trapped for more than 40 hours before being found yesterday. The 36-year-old got stuck on Tuesday afternoon in a lift of an office building. The building was then closed for the New Year break. Reuters - Hong Kong

Gingrich to keep job after ethics probe

Newt Gingrich will be able to retain his powerful position in the US Congress following a probe of his ethics, sources close to the investigation said.

The House ethics subcommittee recommended that Mr Gingrich, a Republican, be given a reprimand, rather than the more serious punishment of censure, which would have cost him his job as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The decision means that Gingrich can stay at his post, one of the most influential legislative jobs in Washington.

The investigation focused on Gingrich's involvement with a tax-exempt organization which he set up to finance a college course. The course was videotaped and distributed as a recruiting aid. AP - Washington

Glacier threat in Alps

Experts are monitoring a huge glacier in Italy's western Alps amid fears that a huge section could drop onto an inhabited valley, authorities said.

The Rome daily *La Repubblica*, citing unidentified experts, reported that a block of about 30,000 cubic metres of ice and snow may break free within a month from the Grados Jorasses glacier on the Mount Blanc range. The collapse could threaten the village of Planinieux and hotels in the Ferret valley. AP - Courmayeur, Italy

Away from a manger

A thief stole a sheep from a Christmas nativity crib in the western Belgian city of Ghent and slaughtered it on the spot, police said.

The thief left only the sheep's head, feet and entrails but did not touch three other sheep and the plaster statues of Joseph, the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus. "Looks like someone who wanted a New Year's Eve meal," Ghent police said. Reuters - Brussels

COMET SALE NOW ON

EXTRA SAVINGS ON SALE PRICES WITH THESE VOUCHERS 4 DAYS ONLY

WHIRLPOOL
9.8 GROSS CU.FT FRIDGE FREEZER
● 6.7 cu.ft gross fridge capacity
● 3.1 cu.ft gross freezer capacity
● Automatic fridge defrost
● Fast freeze facility ● 2 salad crispers
● Reversible doors. Model ART791. was £286.99 previously £309.99 sale £266.99

VOUCHER SAVE
£249.99 £150
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

PROLINE
FULL SIZE DISHWASHER
● 12 place settings
● 6 programmes ● Quick wash
● 26 litres normal water consumption
● Residual drying
Model D18000. was £299.99 sale £209.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£199.99 £100
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

TRICITY
TOUCH CONTROL COMBINATION MICROWAVE
● 800 watts IEC ● 1.0 cu.ft capacity
● 5 power levels ● 1400 watts grill
● Auto defrost ● Programmable
Model CM600. was £199.99 previously £229.99 sale £169.99

VOUCHER SAVE
£179.99 £120
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

NO CLAIM MONEY BACK 5-YEAR WARRANTY!
For real peace of mind, a single premium payment guarantees five years' comprehensive cover against product breakdown. If, after five years, you've made no claim, you can get all your warranty money back in full!

THE COMET PRICE: The Comet Price is the lowest price available to the public. It is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer. The Comet Price is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer. The Comet Price is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer.

SAVE UP TO £150 ON LAUNDRY & DISHWASHERS

INDESIT
1000 SPIN WASHING MACHINE
800-1200 spin/11lb wash load
18 programmes/variable wash temperature/half load option
Economy wash. Model WH1203 was £399.99 sale £279.99

VOUCHER SAVE
£249.99 £150
OFFER EXTENDED - 4 DAYS ONLY

CRUSADER REVERSE ACTION TUMBLE DRYER
6.6lb drying load
2 drying temperatures
Front cool tumble
Model 37317 was £129.99 previously £189.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE SAVE
£119.99 £50

TRICITY BENDIX 1000 SPIN WASHING MACHINE
800-1200 spin/11lb wash load
15 programmes/half load option
Freeze and hold. Model CWD1010 was £410.99 previously £499.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE SAVE
£399.99 £100

ZANUSSI FULL SIZE DISHWASHER
Automatic wash system
12 place settings/9 programmes
Ultrasonic "MultiJet" basket adjustment system/4 wash temperatures. Model DW927 was £429.99 previously £519.99

BUY NOW PAY 10 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£419.99 £100

SAVE UP TO £130 ON REFRIGERATION

KELVINATOR
4.5 GROSS CU.FT FRIDGE
2 shelves/2 drawers/adjustable thermostat/Full width salad crisper
3 star frozen food compartment
Model K14000. was £149.99 previously £199.99 sale £139.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£129.99 £70
OFFER EXTENDED - 4 DAYS ONLY

ZANUSSI 4.5 GROSS CU.FT UPRIGHT FREEZER
4 freezer compartments
4 star freezer rating/1st frost freeze facility. Model ZF45 was £259.99 previously £299.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE SAVE
£249.99 £50

HOTPOINT 12.0 GROSS CU.FT FROST-FREE FRIDGE FREEZER
7.2 cu.ft gross fridge capacity
4.8 cu.ft gross freezer capacity
Automatic defrost
Fast freeze facility/2 salad crispers
Model S2010. was £179.99 previously £229.99 sale £159.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE SAVE
£159.99 £130

SAVE UP TO £170 ON COOKERS

PARKINSON COWAN
900mm width/Double oven
Spark ignition/Glass door
3 different types of burner
Touchpad glass lid
Easy clean enamel finish
Model ABAS000. was £169.99

BUY NOW PAY 10 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£169.99 £170
EXCLUSIVE TO COMET

CREDA ELECTRIC COOKER
900mm width/Solid hot plate/4 burners/2 ovens
Easy clean finish
Model PHAP001. was £299.99 previously £349.99 sale £259.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£249.99 £100
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

SAVE UP TO 50% ON CLEANERS

DYSON CYCLONE CYLINDER CLEANER
1800 watts suction power
Unique bagless system
"Dual Cyclone" technology
Unique star tugging design
Superior air filtration
On-board tools
Model DC02. was £199.99

BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£189.99 £10

PANASONIC UPRIGHT CLEANER
750 watts suction power
On-board tools/Wall-to-wall cleaning/Automatic carpet-type detector/Dustbag full indicator
Model MC544-1. was £159.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE HALF PRICE
£79.99

ELECTROLUX "POWERWAY" 3-IN-1 CLEANER
1200 watts suction power
Completes with tools/Vacuums, washes carpets and cleans up spills/Powerway cleaning nozzle
Model 283. was £199.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE HALF PRICE
£99.99

£5 MILLION STOCK CLEARANCE

Choose from a wide range of ex-display, shop soiled and refurbished products, all at clearance prices. All guaranteed for 12 months.

FREE PRINTER NORMALLY £999.99 WITH THIS MULTIMEDIA PC

COMMODORE MULTIMEDIA PC
EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
Intel 133MHz Pentium processor
8MB EDO RAM/28MB hard disk
28.8Kbps modem/250 hard disk
5.25" 3.5" floppy drives. Model P120

BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£999.99 4 DAYS ONLY
VOUCHER: FREE PRINTER

SAVE £45 ON THIS TV & VIDEO PACKAGE

GOODMANS 20" TV/VIDEO PACKAGE
20" TELETEXT TV, 490-line screen
Screen/Remote control/Screen display/SCART socket. Total 2029. was £199.99 sale £189.99

LONG PLAY VIDEO
Digital tracking/SCART socket
On-screen display. Model 74000 was £159.99 sale £149.99

BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£329.99 £45

SAVE £30 ON THIS NICAM STEREO VIDEO

AIWA NICAM STEREO VIDEO
4 headless play/LOC VideoPlus™ programming
SCART sockets
Model HVCC20 was £299.99 sale £269.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£269.99 £30
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

SAVE £50 ON THIS CAMCORDER

JVC VHS-C CAMCORDER
120k digital zoom/high speed shot
Programme A-E
Model GRAX00. was £399.99

BUY NOW PAY 10 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£349.99 £50
EXCLUSIVE TO COMET

SAVE £70 ON THIS PLAYSTATION GAME PACK

SONY PLAYSTATION PLUS 4 TOP TITLE GAMES
INCLUDING: FURBURY 12 bit machine with Formula 1, Mortal Kombat 3, Wangan Motor Speedway
£28.95 in-store £319.95

BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER
SALE SAVE
£319.95 £70

SAVE UP TO £100 ON HI-FI SYSTEMS

PANASONIC 5 DISC MULTIPLAY CD MINI HI-FI
50 watts RMS power output
FM/AM/UV digital tuner
30 track programmable CD
Model DAE50. was £299.99 sale £279.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£249.99 £80
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

GOODMANS CD MINI HI-FI
21 track programmable CD player
Full logic cassette deck/Random and repeat CD player/Remote control
Auto-reverse. Model HASS20 was £119.99 previously £199.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£109.99 £9
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

AIWA 5 DISC MULTIPLAY CD MINI HI-FI
25 watts RMS power output
FM/AM/UV digital tuner
30 track programmable CD
Model DAE50. was £299.99 sale £279.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£299.99 £50
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

TECHNICS CD MINI HI-FI
40 watts RMS power output
Digital tuner/30 station memory/Remote control
Model SC2450 was £299.99 sale £279.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
VOUCHER SAVE
£329.99 £100
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - 4 DAYS ONLY

THE COMET PRICE PROMISE

If you buy any product from Comet, then within 14 days find a better price, we'll refund the difference. PLUS 10% OF THE DIFFERENCE.

THE COMET PRICE: The Comet Price is the lowest price available to the public. It is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer. The Comet Price is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer. The Comet Price is the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from Comet. It is not the price you will pay for the product when you buy it from another retailer.



'Why her?' An ex-councillor, columnist and magazine contributor, Alma Birk went to the Lords in 1967

صبرنا من الازل

The end of Empire will test our good faith

This year is already marked out as one of great significance for Britain, and not just because of the forthcoming election. In June Hong Kong, the last colony of any great strategic or economic importance, is to be handed back to China after more than 150 years under the Union flag.

It is a momentous step in the history of Hong Kong, once derided by Lord Palmerston as a barren little island, now one of the world's leading financial centres. But it is also a landmark for Britain. Once Hong Kong goes, there remains only a cluster of islands – once strategically important, now just dots in the oceans of the globe.

Empire was always regarded by its proponents as a mirror in which the British could see reflected their glory, their moral superiority and their strength. We have another chance to show what we are made of this year – because the transfer of Hong Kong, perhaps more than any other decolonisation, carries grave risks for the people of the colony.

There have been signs over the past few weeks that the Government is prepared to demonstrate some spine. It has loudly said that China's plans to impose a provisional legislature on Hong Kong go against the spirit and the letter of the Joint Declaration setting out the terms for the

transfer of sovereignty. Governor Chris Patten, in his interview with *The Independent* today, is at pains to point out that Hong Kong's democrats must play a role in the territory after the hand-over.

But as important as the detail – more so – is that Britain continues to focus on Hong Kong, keeping its eyes on the Chinese-appointed authorities and their Peking masters. The omens are not good here. The British have drifted out of empire, rarely focusing on the problems we have caused, rarely aware of the continued existence of those places where once we ruled.

A hundred years ago, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee with a vast display of imperial might in a country that ruled a quarter of the globe. Today, we are barely aware that it ever existed. Apart from the names of streets and pubs that commemorate imperial battles or heroes, an immigrant population that came from the colonies and found a cold welcome, and a taste for an oriental beverage which we deify with milk, there is not much on the surface to show that we were once an imperial nation.

Beneath the surface, however, there is a lot. Our economy is built on the networks stitched together by empire. Most of our great institutions – from the banks to the BBC –

bear its imprint. Our literature is full of it, from the historical to the present day. Our cuisine, in kitchens or high-street restaurants, is a testament to empire, as is our language, with its hangarows, its pyjamas and its running amok. The very creation of the idea of Britishness owes much to the imperial experience, as Linda Colley points out in her study, *Britons*.

Above all, there is our attitude to the rest of the world, a curious mixture of arrogance, indifference and post-imperial insecurity. All too

often, we still subconsciously see the world in terms that we have inherited from the 19th century.

Imperious still, despite our fall from grace, we rarely heed Kipling's hubristic warning: "Lest we forget – lest we forget!" We have forgotten; the achievements of empire, and the atrocities, all have been relegated to the history books, if there. All that remains is a kind of Merchant Ivory version, restaurants called "A Taste of the Raj", or Rhodes on the telly. We are a nation that has effaced our history and replaced it with a "Her-

itage" version – more palatable, less controversial, less colourful.

Later this year, we have a chance to make amends and to show that the links forged by culture, by trade and by history still mean something. Emergency help for Hong Kong dissidents and ethnic minorities must be considered as a last-minute possibility. But that should be only the start.

Britain is to host a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh in October, the first time such a meeting has been held here for 20 years. It is perhaps fitting that the Commonwealth will meet after the Conservatives are likely to have lost the election, ending nearly 20 years of Tory rule. For all their imperial baggage, first picked up by Disraeli in his Crystal Palace speech of 1872, the Conservatives have shown scant interest in the former colonies since the end of empire (beside the occasional rumble over the white colonial élites).

Aid to the Commonwealth nations has been cut, their interests have routinely been ignored, and Margaret Thatcher rarely thought it worth her while to listen to the views of her peers when they met. It is to be hoped that will change under a new government.

One of the first tasks that a new Foreign Secretary will be asked to

perform is to attend the Hong Kong hand-over. If things go wrong, then or in the aftermath of Chinese rule, it will be up to – perhaps – Robin Cook to make sure that Britain's voice is heard, and respected. The empire may have gone, but the post-imperial responsibilities are still there.

The millennium? You just missed it

So we've missed it. According to St. Christian academics, Jesus must have been born in or before 4BC. The mix-up was, it turns out, perpetrated by a monk, Dionysius Exiguus, in 664. Thus the "real" new millennium began in 1996. The monk's lapse of concentration will cast a small cloud of doubt over the frantic money-raising for the coming millennium party. In fact, of course, we are really celebrating the survival of ourselves, the human race, without whose counting there would be no tally of years. At the same time, we should be looking at our behaviour and asking: but for how much longer? Here, at least, old Exiguus has done us a small favour: those who believed that 2,000 years of Christ in the world had some magical significance and meant The End have already been proved wrong.

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Empathy the key to debate on abortion

Sir: At the heart of the debate on abortion is how to deal with an always tragic conflict of interests between the mother and the unborn child. Almost all can empathise with the plight of the mother, and hence the general consensus on her right to choose; however, many also empathise with the child, especially at the later stages of development.

From Polly Toynbee's comments (1 January), one can only deduce she is unwilling or unable to countenance the latter at any stage; viability, she declares, should not be considered in determining the time limit on abortion. And she even claims that the issues are so crystal clear that even pro-lifers are half-hearted in their protests.

So come on, Ms Toynbee, explain. What are these supposedly self-evident truths about the nature of the unborn child? Please spell out the universally agreed stages in development at which a foetus is granted no rights/some rights/full human rights. Do you believe there are any circumstances in which society should deny a woman the right to an abortion, even up to full term?

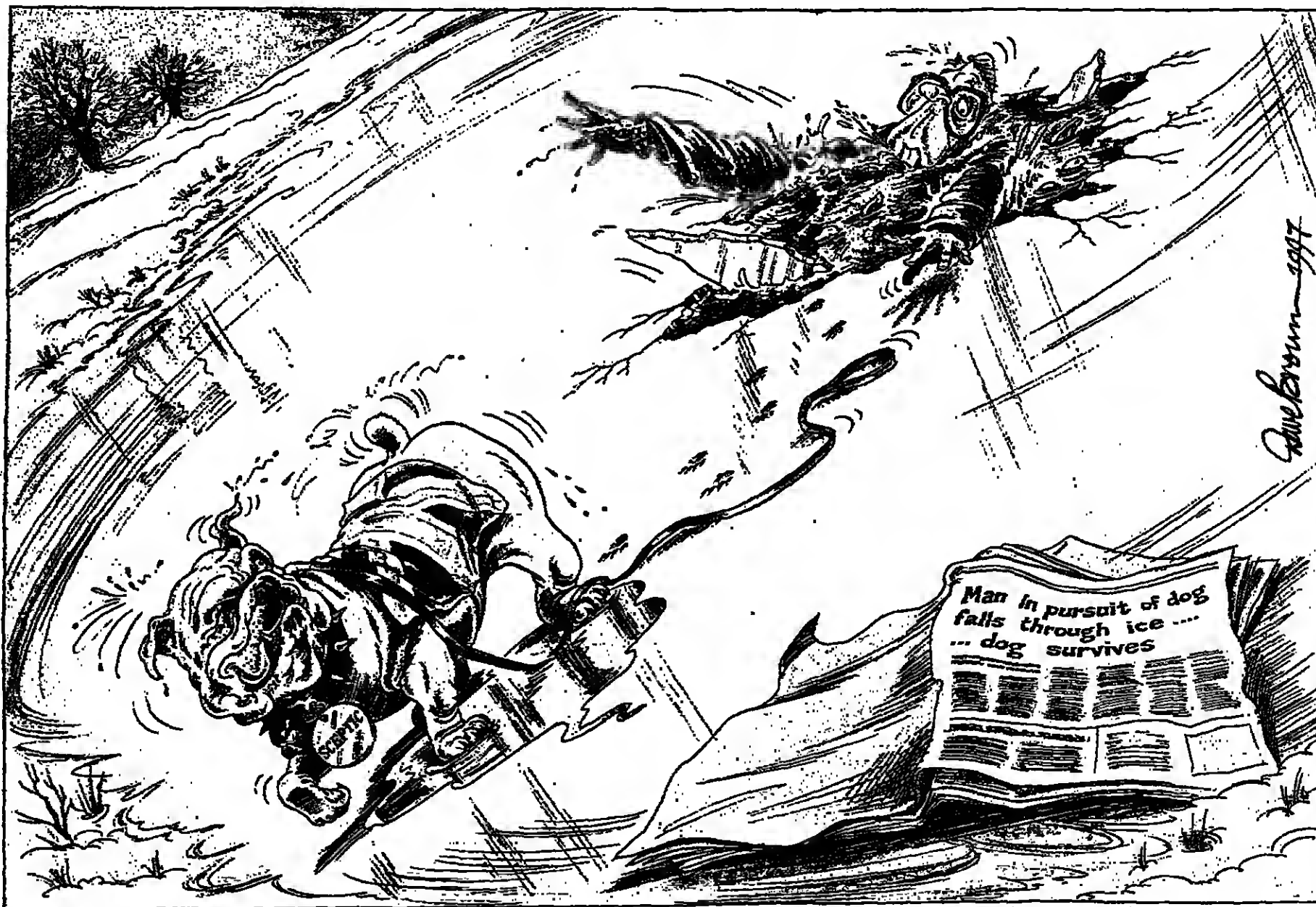
It is precisely this inability or refusal to empathise with others – particularly society's victims – which is seen in other contexts as a major cause of the disintegration of social cohesion and the rise in violence. And it is a lack of empathy which drives the US pro-life extremists – with whom Ms Toynbee claims to sympathise – to acts of violence, and which, thankfully, is absent in this country. MANUS HENRY Oxford

Sir: Those proposing that the criminal law is applied to abortion present evidence which does not accord with the memories of those who practised medicine prior to the present Act. Bouncing babies adopted by loving parents did exist; but all too common were infected and sometimes dying women who had obtained an abortion in the back streets.

It is an illusion to think that prohibiting abortion by law will mean no abortions; desperate women will seek help where they can. All terminations of pregnancy are to be regretted, but there should be a choice for these to be performed in decent and hygienic conditions. DR PETER SAUNDY Llangynidr, Powys

Sir: In reply to Polly Toynbee's taunts, I for one would be very willing to barricade myself outside the Houses of Parliament if that would change the abortion laws. The fact that American-style aggression tactics are not present in England in no way betokens a lack of desperate feeling. The next few months may provide the most effective rejoinder to Ms Toynbee's gibes! The Rev CHRIS FINDLAY-WILSON Poole, Dorset

Sir: Your leading article of 30 December defends Tony Blair's voting for abortion on the grounds that he will not impose his morality on his neighbours. I look forward to hearing parliamentary candidates say that although they personally favour abortion, they will vote against it on the grounds that they cannot impose their morality on unborn children. BRENDAN GERARD London NW7



Stupid machine is no threat

Sir: Andrew Wyatt's letter (31 December) caused much mirth at our breakfast table. Only last week, we took delivery of a new word-processor and found ourselves muttering a number of words not to be found in its vocabulary. This machine of infinite self-satisfaction speaks no tongue but its own, and can never answer questions like "Why are you asking me to close documents I am not aware of having opened?"

Machines may have brains, if these really are only a "mass of electrochemical switches", but they are totally and boringly lacking in personality. If we had had a human teacher to explain our new machine to us last week, instead of a set of inflexible mechanical responses, we should not have missed the last post on Christmas Eve. I never cease to wonder at the naivety of scientists who keep on hoping that one day their dolls will turn out to be alive. DORIAN POTTS Oxford

Sir: Andrew Wyatt, envisaging a world taken over by artificial intelligence, seems to be content with the idea that some time in the near future the human race will be treated in the same way as it currently treats chimpanzees. I do not look forward to a day when people are kept in small cages with no room to exercise and may be used for vivisection. A Brave New Future? I don't think so. S WROE Birmingham

Sir: Andrew Wyatt, in his image of our future on some earthlike nature reserve, mentions that we would be protected and safe. Us? Get a grip. It is the rest of the universe that would be protected and safe. JOHN ATHANASIOU London N9

Slow train

Sir: Roger Cowell (letter, 31 December) complains with reason about the train service from Oxford. A service such as he experienced sends a message to its customers: "We are unreliable and do not care about you. Please do not use our trains."

However, the Oxford train service was notoriously poor even before privatisation; hence the successful coach services which now compete with the trains between Oxford and London. By contrast, South West Trains' services from Hampshire to London were good before privatisation, and remain so (same trains, mostly the same staff). Privatisation seems to have had little effect on service quality either way, so far. JOHN STANNING Winchester

Omen for Major?

Sir: As we enter a general election year, it may be of interest to recall what Salisbury said to Balfour about a failing Disraeli administration.

As head of a Cabinet his fault was want of firmness. The chiefs of Departments got their own way too much. The Cabinet as whole got it too little, and this necessarily followed from having at the head of affairs a statesman whose only final political principle was that the Party must on no account be broken up, and who shrank therefore from exercising coercion on any of his subordinates. PHILIP GOLDENBERG Woking, Surrey

Stroll into the new millennium

Sir: As I read – and sympathised with – the hopes of Lord Rogers for the Millennium Dome (letter, 23 December) I wondered if it would not be more daring, and more sensible, to spend millions, hundreds of millions, on transforming central London – even briefly – into a car-free zone.

World's Largest Pedestrian City? Millennium Festival: Biggest Street Fair Ever? What would a season of traffic-free London produce in terms of visitors, events, and defining London as the city of the future? What would £700m buy? A week? A month? Six months? And what if it included imaginative transformations of Trafalgar Square, Marylebone Road, the Mall, Oxford Street? Temporary constructions, happenings, performance spaces, gardens.

The Exhibition of 1851 was partly about things to come. It fired the imagination, drawing the curious from around the world. It was hugely successful, and transformed London.

What worked then doesn't work now. Faith in technology has eroded. Architectural monuments and grand landscapes are less and less likely to draw people. We look for improved quality of life in less tangible things: free time, open space, peace and quiet, a healthy environment and a sense of common purpose. A bold step in that direction would again bring people from around the world. It might mark the start of another era. DAVID PAPADOPOULOS London N4

Knights do battle for the theatre

Sir: It is splendid that Alan Ayckbourn and Richard Eyre have both been knighted. The regional theatre in Britain has long honoured them both for their contribution to it and their redoubtable defence of it.

Sir Alan's battle in Scarborough ("Why Ayckbourn will fight on for his theatre", 31 December) is indeed representative of several last-ditch stands that will take place this spring as the effects of central government's standstill grant to the Arts Council and its annual cuts to local councils come through the pipeline.

For every one of the past five years regional theatres have warned that they are cutting the number of plays they produce, the number of actors they employ, the adventurousness of their programming and their valuable services in education and training. We are being forced to diminish the many roles we play, from helping to create more cohesive local communities through to underpinning the commercial theatre.

This latter role has been fully acknowledged by our most successful commercial producer, Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Now we have two more knights in the field. We'll need them more than ever in the dangerous weeks ahead when local councils and the Arts Council take their onerous decisions, while the Government turns a blind eye

to the damage it is doing to the health and wealth of the nation. PHILIP HEDLEY Artistic Director Theatre Royal Stratford East London E15

Sir: Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Michael Tippett, Sir William Walton, Lord Webber. Enough said. DAVID MOORE Ipswich

Intrusion at the prison gate

Sir: The allegations by members of the probation service of intrusive body-searching ("Union acts over jail searches of visitors", 28 December) are alarming. I write as a former member of the probation service, of the Probation Inspectorate, and as one who currently has extensive contact with probation officers throughout the country.

Over the years, I have never encountered any reported incidents among members of the service that the Prison Department seems so keen to prevent. In the past two or three years I have been an occasional official visitor to a maximum-security prison in a neighbouring county. These visits have been made to probation staff and not to prisoners. Nevertheless, although I have not been searched in the intimate fashion so rightly complained of by probation officers, every item in one's possession has to be removed, and on one occasion my pen was unscrewed on another small nail-

file safely lodged in a corn case had to be left at the gate. Not even high-risk visitors such as El Al go to such lengths. At the prison in question a costly system of identity cards for visitors was introduced, only to be abandoned for technical reasons; this would not, however, have obviated the regular searching procedures.

I am fully in favour of rigorous measures to prevent escapes and the introduction of contraband items, if these are applied in a discriminating fashion and with an adequate understanding of risk-assessment. In view of current prison overcrowding the Prison Department can ill afford to alienate professionals like probation officers who can often help to defuse tensions. Professor H PRINS Midlands Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice Loughborough University Leicestershire

Happy dogs in quarantine

Sir: It seems clear that the discussion on rabies and quarantine rules ("Quarantine laws on the dog house", 13 December) is to be clouded by an anthropomorphic argument as follows: "I would hate to face six months solitary confinement; therefore my dog suffers as I would."

This is not necessarily true. Can a dog appreciate time – especially a future duration of six months? I was for some time in veterinary

charge of quarantine kennels, and observed the behaviour of many dogs. They settled down at once to regular meals (maybe better balanced than at home), regular exercise and what we would call "boredom". Of course, when their owners visited, they exhibited transports of excitement and joy; yet as soon as the visitors were out of sight, sound and smell, the dog would settle down to "do its time" at once. I saw no evidence of pining. Since those days I have had to deal with a good few cases of rabies and suspected rabies when in the tropics, and I continue to support our quarantine regulations for the sake of animals which could be exposed to this terrible death, wild life put at the same risk, and of owners and others having to deal with rabid dogs. BRENDAN HALPIN MRCVS Charlbury, Oxfordshire

Rape trauma

Sir: Remarks attributed to Professor Joan Freeman ("Years of trauma for rape victims", 30 December) are factually incorrect. Long-term psychological disorder is not an inevitable consequence of rape. Not all rape victims feel guilty. Children are not necessarily more resilient than adults. Treatment does not have to be given daily for a year.

These comments can only further depress women who are coping with the consequences of sexual assault, and dissuade them from seeking the effective and relatively brief treatments which are available. Dr JAMES THOMPSON Director, Traumatic Stress Clinic London W7

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.

E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

essay



Rich men behaving badly

Seventeen years ago, when Scottish devotion went down the Suwannee and Margaret Thatcher steamed in to power, I made my excuses and left. I had been offered the newly created chair in British studies at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

One of the other contenders was Dr Alan Sked of the London School of Economics. Like some university character in Anthony Powell's *Dance to the Music of Time*, encountered subsequently in a new and implausible guise, Dr Sked (another Scot, but let that pass) is these days the supreme of the United Kingdom Independence Party, sworn foe of the federal Europe that he seemingly wasn't too worried about in 1979. Sked's outfit is a Reliant Robin in the national salvation stakes, but has scored first blood in a contest that looks like outdoing Tory-Labour or even Tory-Tory for all-out venom.

One John Bostock, North-west regional organiser of Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, has fled to Sked, claiming that Goldsmith's is a Potemkin party, "an empty shell... run by amateurs". As a former Conservative agent, he should know what he is talking about, but I don't intend to intrude on the private grief of Anglo-Britain. The alluring thing about the clash of patriots is its entertainment value.

Stranger than fiction: squabbling luminaries of the anti-European parties, headed by a wild-eyed Sir James Goldsmith, remind Christopher Harvie of some outlandish characters from literature

Watching Goldsmith and his Referendum Party — recycled Thatcherite headbangers and golden-thighed blondes out of *Hellol* cavorting before the Victor Meldrew fan club of Godalming — is certainly more fun than John and Tony intoning Christian morality. But have we been here before?

Those staring china-blue eyes, Fleming's Goldfinger had 'em. But he was dwarfish, red-haired and wore plus fours. Staring out of Goldsmith's sun-wrinkled skull, they reminded me more of Jeremy Bentham's head, in that bathtub in University College London. Bang on for fanaticism, but very dead.

Or Buchanan's Dominic Medina in *The Three Hostages*? Hemispherical skull right, eyes right, Tory party background right. But Medina was Irish, not much taken with the Great British public: a proto-Eurocrat, for sure.

Go back a bit. Disraeli's Sidonia, out of *Contarini*? Jewish, cosmopolitan, been there, seen that, knew them, and could buy the lot, given time and inclination. Disraeli himself managed to put the Tory party out of the political running for nearly 30 years, after he went for Peel's jugular over Free Trade in 1846. Hmm.

Think of the Goldsmith entourage, and remember a scabrous but entertaining series of novels by Simon Raven: *Alms for Oblivion*, *Friends in Low Places*, *The Rich Play Late*, *Places Where They Sing*, *Bring Forth the Body*. This was a public-school world inhabited almost exclusively by Flashmans, in which various kuche customers — military men, gamblers, journalists, academics and straightforward shits of hell — sallied out on toxic versions of the Drones Club and the *Spectator*.

For a decade they wheeled and dealt entertainingly in Macmillan's and Wilson's England, combating "the malice of time, chance and the rest of the human race". And despite this,

they had all managed to reappear in the penumbra of the Referendum Party, albeit older and baldier: the Carton Weirs, Max de Frevilles, Lords Canteloupe. Admittedly the orang-tan tendency of John Aspinall seemed beyond even Raven's powers of imagination, but the ineffable Lord Rees-Mogg, intoning in *The Times*, bad figured as the hyper-devous Somerset.

Lloyd-James in Raven and Edward Fox was quite capable of playing the lot. But other things have changed. Multi-national speculators, Merdies, Lopezos and Melmottes, used to come to grief under the symbolic wheels of British justice. Nowadays they tend to own them. In *Alms for Oblivion* days, Goldsmith was — when not gambling at the Claremont and parrying at Annabels — harmlessly occupied in the grocery business, boggling kitchen rolls to Scottish wives in Templeton's and Coopers. After his Wilson knighthood, like many an 'Eighties' superstar, he went global and invented something called "polyculturalism". This meant the freedom to make deals in several languages from several tax havens.

Goldsmith is now before us as Anglo-British patriot. The recent sequence of adverts, urging the voters to choose between a federal Europe and some so-far-unrealised association of national states, cost

about £225,000, or half the entire election budget of the Scottish National Party. If you allocate Goldsmith's total £31m largesse seat-by-seat, he will be putting up £2.3m in Scotland alone.

Since the effect of rallies, money, more than 600 candidates and bags of publicity from the right-wing press, has not even been a hairline blip in the opinion polls, the Referendums begin to look more like the Maharishi's Levitators than, say, Sir Oswald Mosley's New Party in 1931. And Mosley, as an ex-Labour minister, had more credibility.

Although the Referendum ideology may be comforted — good of Dickeyan parliamentary sovereignty plus people's rights against Parliament — their appeal to Tory activists who now find themselves forlorn, eddied from local affairs, menaced by his capitalism, is real enough. This is going to be an election where a couple of percentage points off the Tory vote could make the difference between manageable defeat and catastrophe on the scale of 1846 or 1906 — with intriguing consequences for the grander sort of speculation.

It is this "going for broke" element — volcanic cash movements with millions punted on the outcome — which conjures up Raven's world: de Freville, Lykiadopoulos, Lloyd James, doing rather well against time,

chance, etc. Not least Sir James himself, unloading his grocery shares before Black Friday, when immature yuppies went from bang to crash.

Annabel's and the Claremont are now up and running on a world scale: dedicated to the preservation of the ethic that turns currency fluctuations into huge gains for the very rich. Since speculation accounts for about 90 per cent of the business of the City of London, with boring old industrial finance clocking up a mere 10 per cent, the Referendum boys will have a lot of well-heeled allies in strappy shirts, who don't like the idea of a stable euro one bit.

What Raven cottoned on to, and more solemn cultural critics such as Correlli Barnett and Martin Wiener did not, has been how well aristocratic values of a sort have actually coped with Bagehot's "rough and vulgar world of English commerce". The gotten baize tables at Whites and Crockfords have always been closer to the City than to the widget-makers.

Since the mid-Seventies, London flashpots have thrived on the immigration of great, if less-than-progressive, wealth from the Middle East and more recently from East Europe.

While Thatcher wittered on about providing "know-how" to the ex-Soviets to enable them to become Grantham councillors and pillars of the Wesleyan Chapel, Russia's new neo-feudalists exported about 15 times more cash westwards for booze, cars, jewellery, girls and property.

This commonwealth of high-rollers is the up-to-date version of what the US President Teddy

Roosevelt called at the beginning of the century "the malefactors of great wealth". Roosevelt developed federal government to work in favour of the citizen by keeping the Fisks, Morgans and Rockefellerers in line, and it is this "strong" version of federalism that Goldsmith and his ilk view with all the enthusiasm that Dracula had for garlic. Brussels is more of a babel than it ought to be, but the way its conventions are being built up resembles, as Judge David Edward of the European Court-at-Luxembourg has told us, the American federal ideal admired by Roosevelt's friend, the Scots constitutionalist and internationalist James Bryce. Once a properly federal authority gets them in its sights, the "polycultural" rich have every reason to be scared.

In the 18th century, Adam Smith and David Hume argued that a small state like their own Scotland couldn't restrain the "luxury and corruption" that went with capitalism: hence the importance to them of the Union and the London parliament. But luxury and corruption were as much the breath of life to Raven's gang as duping local Tory worthies with flannel about moral revival. Is it a coincidence that Goldsmith and company (and behind them a none-too-discreet Rupert Murdoch) arrive like the US cavalry when Westminster, far from tackling ballooning global speculation, accommodates it?

Hypocrisy was the stock-in-trade of Raven's Turbots and Cantaloupes. Overdone at the time, this hunch would quickly

grasp how ill constitutional patriotism sits with a public estimate which has gone, over two decades, from enthusiasm to near-disgust. Sleaze, still exotic in *Alms for Oblivion*, now looks like the lubricant that runs the place.

In an epoch where one part-time novelist, Douglas Hurd, could put his salary up by a factor of four when he shifted from the Foreign Office to a bank, Westminster itself looks like a South-east England microstate — the Senate of Nimbya — performing Monaco or Liechtenstein services for the sinking rich.

There is a lot of ruin in a nation, but a point comes when sheer delirium sets in. Anglo-British, of which the Referendum Party is the pathological version, seems to have got there. Twenty-odd years ago, before Anthony Trollope became the comfort blanket of the English élite, Raven made a second reputation adapting him for television, scoring a particular hit with *The Way We Live Now*.

This sour tale was of England teeming with speculators, mercenary yuppies and aristos on the take, the House of Commons as its head. It was chosen by John Major as his gift to the newly elected Bill Clinton. Was he trying to tell him something? "I like a rough game," says Raven's Lord Cantaloupe after some particularly dirty deal has kept nemesis at bay, "and even a foul one, but I won't risk blowing the entire stadium down by Polyculturalists don't have to worry about that."

Professor Harvie is the author of *The Centre of Things: British Political Fiction from Disraeli to the Present*, Routledge, £11.95. He is currently writing an introduction for the Everyman edition of Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister*.

Advertisement

Seven out of ten in the UK die without a Will

Few people expect to pass away in the near future — most of us have every expectation of going on for years. Perhaps this is the reason seven out of ten people in this country die without ever making a Will.

There are other reasons of course. Will making is often thought to be time-consuming and complicated — this is not always the case. Sometimes there are issues which are difficult to discuss with family members.

Others assume that, even without a Will, when they die, their wife or husband will automatically inherit all their money and possessions.

Not true.

Making a Will — and keeping it up to date — is essential to safeguard your loved ones.

If you are married, your property may not necessarily pass in its entirety to your husband or wife, unless you make a Will leaving him or her everything.

If you are unmarried, none of your property will pass to your surviving partner unless you make a Will. If you die without leaving a Will, the law provides that certain relatives, including brothers, sisters, parents, cousins, aunts and uncles might be entitled to your estate. It leaves a horrible mess — at a time when the people you leave behind, and hoped to be able to support, are least able to cope.

When you marry, any Will you made previously may become null and void. If you divorce, any provision made for your previous spouse is cancelled. The birth of a child or a death in the family could mean you should amend an existing Will. A significant increase or reduction in the value of your personal assets could require an amendment to any existing Will. If you die without leaving a Will and you have no relatives, your entire estate will go to the government.

Making a Will — and keeping it up to date — is absolutely vital if you want to ensure that the needs of

your loved ones are catered for in the event of your death.

Have you made a Will? Is your Will up to date?

WWF have published a free guide to Will making which outlines, clearly, the issues you need to bear in mind when preparing a Will and explains some of the more confusing jargon associated with Wills and bequests.

It also describes how you can go about making a bequest to charity — in particular WWF-UK. Remember, having an out-of-date Will is little better than having no Will at all. This free booklet is essential reading if you care about your family and friends — it's, also important for your own peace of mind.

So, send for your free guide today, which you can request by calling 01483 426446 or writing to Sally Burrows, Legacies Officer, WWF-UK, FREEPOST, Panda House, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1BR.

Please also remember to quote reference IN23.

Bollie all round: last year's fabbest women

Yesterday I brought you the top boys' names of 1996 as calculated from their popularity in media headlines, with Mister (as in "Mister Darcy") and "Mister Wiloughby" being the winners, closely pursued by other unusual boys' names such as Wallace and Gromit, which goes to show that new names can still make their mark even today.

Incidentally, I have had several protests saying that the whole thing must be fixed, as the name John (as in John Major) was not even mentioned. What these protesters do not realise is that the PM is never referred to as John in headlines; he is always referred to by his surname, as footballers and cricketers are. You may be able to fiddle things on *Today* but not in this column!

And so to the girls' names of 1996. No sign this year of last year's winner, Pamela Anderson, nor of other hot names such as Divine and Janet. One can hardly remember now why the name Divine was so fashionable — indeed, I find it hard to dig

up any reference to Janet Street-Porter, responsible alone for the popularity of the name Janet in 1995. Where is she now? What is she doing? No answers on a postcard, please.

Some interesting new girls' names this year, including Mandy. What is interesting about this is that although it is a girl's name, it is borne most famously by a man, Peter Mandelson. We have also seen a revival of Jennifer, partly because of the TV programme *Two Fat Ladies* and partly because of Jennifer Saunders, author of the now departed *Absolutely Fabulous*. One very interesting thing about *Absolutely Fabulous*, by the way, is that if you imagined Edna and Patsy going on into later life, you can't help thinking that they might end up very like Chrissie and Jennifer in *Two Fat Ladies*. Was this in fact intended to be a sitcom and are they fictional characters? Just a thought.

Incidentally, it is food for thought that the names of the two characters in *Absolutely Fabulous* — Edna and Patsy — came higher up



Miles Kingston

the list than the names of the actresses playing them. But without further ado, on to the top 10 newspaper girls' names in 1996. (Last year's positions in brackets.)

1. Emma (8)
2. Fergie 'n' Di (-)
3. Cruella (-)
4. Aung (-)
5. Pocahontas (9)
6. Pandora (-)
7. Ruby (-)
8. Norma (-)
9. Cherie (-)
10. Benazir (-)



Emma is a well-deserved winner, not only because it was the top Jane Austen name of the year, but because it featured in several other successful romantic episodes. Who can forget the period costume drama in which Emma Nicholson was wooed and won by the Liberal Democrats? Or in which Emma Thompson was wooed and won by Mr Wiloughby?

I was personally glad to see Aung so popular, as this unusual Burmese name is attached to the deserving Burmese heroine Aung San Suu Kyi, who has suffered so much at the hands of the thugs who run Burma that she has had a Nobel Peace Prize conferred on her, though she only got third place in the *Today* programme's Personality of the Year contest, behind John Major, who has never shown such an appetite for democracy as Aung San Suu Kyi. Something wrong here, perhaps you are thinking? Cynics might say that it was unlikely for *Today* listeners to have voted for anyone

with personality at all.

What is unusual in this list is that at least three names belong to fictional characters (Emma, Pocahontas and Cruella) and there is some doubt about the existence in real life of anyone called Ruby Wax. Pandora is an unusual name, belonging to the wife of one of the Maxwell brothers and, as the judge in his trial said, it takes a woman of saintly suffering to be married to one of the Maxwell brothers. Other names that bobbed around without quite making the Top 10 were Ffionna, which is the sort of name borne by people who think it is interesting to walk round the world, and Bienvenida, which is the sort of name borne by people... but I had better be careful. No one wants a libel suit so early in the new year. And my predictions for 1997? Well, I fancy a rise in the ratings for Norma 'n' Cherie. Perhaps a sitcom for them together, like Chrissie and Jennifer or Eddie and Patsy? Stranger things have happened.

Ten tips for a happy, hype-free New Year

 **A CABLE & WIRELESS COMPANY**  **MERCURY**
communications

Minister are entitled to your bill at the Mercury National Weekend Rate. All calls include a 35p connection charge. For a quarterly fee you can add SuperCall (£3.75) or 1-800-Call (£3.75) to your BT line.

All prices quoted include 1 AT

RXND 18

business

1997: A preview of the year ahead



Shedding his reserve: Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, with his fiancée, Andrea Mitchell. They announced their engagement after a 12-year courtship

One thing at least can be predicted with some certainty for 1997 – that there will be a general election in Britain before mid-year. The rest is as unpredictable as ever. Is Wall Street's five-year bull market about to come to an end? Is sterling set to become a safe haven currency? What's going to happen to those hated privatised utilities? Who's going to takeover whom? What sort of economy can the next government look forward to? Who's going to make a splash in 1997? *The Independent's* business writers attempt to provide some answers.

Higher rates needn't scare investors

This will be the year of rising interest rates. Short-term rates will rise swiftly in the UK, more slowly in the US and – by the end of 1997 – also begin to rise across continental Europe. The key test for financial markets will be to see how confidently investors can look beyond this cyclical rise and discern the longer-term downward trend. If they are frightened by the rise then it will be a bumpy year for both bonds and currencies; if they can take the long view then the sunlit uplands still beckon. It will be interesting to view the year from Britain. That is not because what happens to UK domestic markets has much influence on the rest of the world. It doesn't. The fall does not wag the dog. Rather it is because the upturn in interest rates will happen here first. It will happen because the new government, whoever is running it, will have

to lean against strong economic growth as one-off costs (from things like the build up of society conversions to p.l. status) add to strong underlying demand. The result will be strong pressure on the Chancellor, whoever he may be, to get interest rates up fast. The quicker he responds, the less damage there will be to long-term interest rates, but a sharp rise in short rates will inevitably make sterling more attractive. So sterling should remain strong too. How high will short-term rates go and how much effect will this have on the pound? UK base rates will probably end the year at or close to 7 per cent. Anyone who tries to call the exact timing of the rises will be wrong, but a plausible profile will be one more quarter point rise before the election and then another three through the

summer and autumn. The peak in the interest rate cycle? Probably not till well into 1998. Impact on gilts? The key here will be the attitude of the next Chancellor. If Labour does get in, the first Budget of the new government will be scrutinised for any use of mirrors to make the figures look better. My guess is that come what may, gilts will have a difficult year, but if there is the prospect of tighter fiscal policy under Labour than under the Tories, then come 1998 the prospects will look much brighter. The impact on the pound? Well, the problem here is that a lot of that impact is already in the market: sterling shot up in the final quarter of last year

and from being clearly undervalued is now close to its underlying purchasing power parity. Of course currencies can, and do, overshoot. It is perfectly possible that sterling will become too strong during the course of this year. In any case there are two sides to the currency equation and whatever happens to the pound will be determined by what happens to the dollar and/or the German mark. A rational expectation would be for sterling to continue to strengthen through the early part of this year but for that rise to peak by mid-year. But the foreign markets are not noted for their reason, and in any case, with the preparations for EMU they will have bigger fish to fry.

In the US, still the dominant market for the world, there will also be a rise in interest rates. The Federal Reserve has its next policy meeting in early February by which stage it will be clear how sustained the present acceleration in growth is likely to be. The bigger question will be later in the year: will the long expansion in the US come to an end of its own accord or will there have to be several rises in rates to choke it off. Mainstream expectation: a couple of further rises in US rates during the course of this year, but no savage tightening. Providing the Fed does act in February there need be no fall-out in the bond market, but at best bond yields will move sideways. But that does not mean that the 15 year long-term downward trend of bond yields, in the US as well as in continental Europe, is ended. As the graph shows

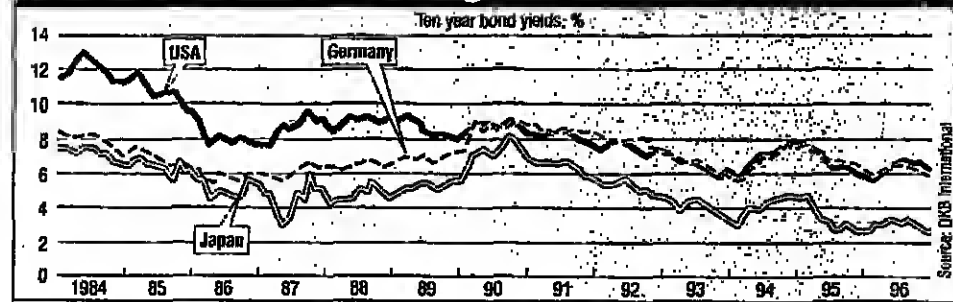
this is a solid long-term trend. Now at some stage that will end once it becomes clear that the downward trend in inflation cannot proceed any further. But this year I think we just see a pause on that downward path. The dollar? Probably some more strength, as the gradual, patchy recovery continues. But the main influence on the dollar will be what happens to the

European currencies. If the euro is going to be a weak currency, as now seems more and more likely, then the dollar's safe haven status will be enhanced. If plans for the EMU fall to bits – maybe not likely but certainly possible – then expect the mark to resume its status as the world's "best" currency. And so to continental markets. Here the rise in interest rates

will not happen until well into the autumn, maybe not till 1998. Bond markets will take courage from this, but currencies will struggle. The single biggest question for bonds and currencies is whether the long-term downward trend of inflation really solid? I think it is. If so, expect a stormy year but with calm water beyond.

CAPITAL MARKETS
by Hamish McRae

Will the fall in long-term rates continue?



Predictability gives way to year of living dangerously

"A year of almost unparalleled predictability." This is how a leading economist summed up 1996 in one of the year-end summaries now spilling out of the City investment banks.

It certainly looks as though the results of *The Independent's* annual Golden Guru award for the best economic forecast, due at the end of January, will be unusually close. The past year has brought few surprises.

But 1997 is going to be a year of unusual uncertainty about the outlook for the UK economy. For starters, there will be a lot of politics around. The election campaign will affect business, investor and consumer behaviour for the next few months. It will cast a shadow over share prices and sterling.

Then if, as still looks likely, Labour wins, the economy will move into uncharted waters. It is obvious that the measures introduced by Gordon Brown will be more like Kenneth Clarke's policies than Denis Healey's two decades ago, but there are still big unknowns. What are New Labour's tax plans? Will the Bank of England get more influence over interest rate decisions?

Looking beyond the blinkers of UK politics, there is more uncertainty out in the world in the coming year. Take two examples: share prices on Wall Street and growth on the Continent. Opinions could not be more divided about where the US stock market is heading. Wall Street pundits are predicting either a crash or another year of double-digit growth in

ECONOMICS
by Diane Coyle

shares. Whichever it is, London is likely to follow suit. Although the links between the stock market and the economy are indirect, a sharp fall – or rise – in share prices would influence investment and consumer confidence.

There is an almost equally deep division of opinion over the outlook for the Continental economies, the main market for British exports. The mainstream consensus is that their struggle to qualify for the single currency will not keep growth so subdued for a second year running.

Yet there are plenty of Euro-pessimists who believe that the efforts of governments on the Continent to reduce their budget deficits to meet the Maastricht criteria will make the next 12 months just as sluggish as the past year. If they are right, the strong pound will guarantee that this spills over into British exports and growth.

The uncertainties in the wider world and in the world of politics amplify the normal sorts of risks attached to economic forecasts.

Forecasts of the UK economy 1997			
	GDP %	Target RPI %	Base rate %
Highest	4.3	4.0	8.25
Lowest	2.8	1.8	5.75
Average	3.5	2.9	7.0
Treasury	3.5	2.5	N/A

Britain's export markets are weak, and without big cuts in interest rates or taxes GDP growth in 1997 will be disappointing. Job insecurity will keep pay rises down even if unemployment falls much further, he predicts.

"If I were a Tory Chancellor who had just had a nerve-racking 18 months of relative stagnation, I would welcome the resurgence of growth in the late summer with open arms and I would nurture it," he concludes.

At the other end of the range lie some of the City economists who see haunting parallels between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, particularly in consumer behaviour. For example, Kevin Gardiner at investment bank Morgan Stanley argues that real wages are rising, more people have jobs, consumer debt-income ratios are low and the windfall of building society share hand-outs and income tax cuts will stimulate spending. Inflation-adjusted spending power, taking account of taxes and mortgages, is 10 per cent higher than a year ago, and will rise faster during 1997. Like the Bank of England, he sees a classic demand-led, inflationary recovery on the horizon.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence to support this outlook, in house prices and high street spending, in falling unemployment and disappointing retail price figures. Although few experts really believe that the UK economy is poised for a re-run of the last boom, none of them expected it last time either.

Few windfalls ahead in period of consolidation

If 1996 was an eventful year for industry – to take but one example half the electricity sector disappeared into American hands – then 1997 promises to be doubly so.

In no particular order we can expect to see further consolidation in the telecommunications industry, increased merger activity among Europe's defence and aerospace companies and a mopping-up operation to take control of the two regional electricity companies still in independent ownership.

In the motor industry D-Day looms for Rover for this is surely the year when its German owners BMW either make their British acquisition pay off or engage in a radical re-think. Along the way, British Gas intends to do the splits but whether many more decide to follow suit after the disaster of the Hanson demerger must be open to question.

Of course the biggest question and the biggest "if" of all for industry is whether it will be operating under a new Government by the middle of the year. If it is, then there can be no question but that the privatised utilities will dominate the industrial year – not because of merger mania but because of Labour's promised windfall tax.

Labour has refused to reveal how much the tax will raise (City estimates range from £5bn to £10bn) and who it will hit until after the election and after consultation with the regulators. Clearly the privatised electricity and water industries are most directly in the firing

line. The big fight will be over a second tier of "non-utility" privatisations, including British Telecom and BAA, which have both been lobbying hard to escape the shadow chancellor Gordon Brown's net. Ironically, it is precisely these kinds of companies which can afford to pay the most.

Assuming a Labour government moves quickly to put the tax on the statute books, the rest of the year could be taken up with complex legal arguments as the utilities seek to ambush

cream off any further excesses. To do much more would need primary legislation, a scarce commodity for any new government.

Mr Blair or not, the energy sector will experience labour pains of its own as the gas and electricity industries prepare for the birth of full competition in their domestic markets from 1998. Expect more fireworks in the south of England as the gas liberalisation trials spread out across a wider area. Expect also further slippage in the time-

INDUSTRY

by Chris Godsmark
and Michael Harrison

the measure. Tony Blair will also face vociferous behind-the-scenes lobbying by utilities taken over since privatisation by US companies. Dieter Helm, director of Oxford Economic Research Associates and a utility expert, believes US lobbying could scupper the tax altogether. "If the Americans bring down the windfall tax by lobbying President Clinton, this could do a lot of damage to Labour. It would mean the party would put its energy into wholesale regulatory reform."

Individual regulators like Jan Byatt at Ofwat would stay, apparently, though boards of non-executives would be created to back them up. The price cap formula used to regulate the utilities would be supplemented by a sliding scale tax designed to

ing of full competition in the domestic electricity market. The deadline has already slipped six months to the right and further delays look inevitable as the Recs drag their feet.

Whoever wins the election, more power is likely to drift towards the regulators. A landmark court victory just before Christmas gave Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications industry regulator, unique powers to ban behaviour by BT which he deems anti-competitive. It would be surprising if his fellow regulators weren't thinking along similar lines for the industries they police.

A super-charged Mr Cruickshank is just one of the challenges facing BT this year. Its other main task will be to secure approval for the £35bn merger

with MCI, the long-distance US telecoms operator. Bel in the alliance gaining regulatory blessing but also that AT&T will not take the competitive threat lying down. Will this be the year that the colossus of the US telecoms industry makes a decisive move into British territory? At one stage it looked as if AT&T might use Energis, the telecoms business put up for sale by the National Grid, as a platform. But the latest indications are that it has dropped out of the bidding. Enter Deutsche Telekom?

While AT&T ponders, the cable industry is reforming under the banner of Cable & Wireless Communications and will pose an increased threat in the telephony market. Watch out too for Iridium, the radio-based telecoms group.

And what of those mature industries as we politely like to call them? Well, the betting must be on BMW grasping the nettle once and for all at Rover and the result could be painful for Midlands car workers.

Meanwhile the American fad for defence mergers looks like crossing the Atlantic. British Aerospace has been doing its bit to drag the rest of Europe into an all-embracing military and civil aerospace alliance. But is this the year when it finally consummates the daddy of all defence mergers – a marriage with GEC?

The timing looks good and in George Simpson, GEC may have the chief executive to pull off a deal. Cometh the hour, cometh the man.

Wheeler-dealer frenzy is all set to continue

Media in Britain had a mega-1996, and all the signs point to another year of wheeler-dealer frenzy. Moreover, at least three events in 1997 – the launch of Channel 5, the birth of digital television and further consolidation in the ITV sector – could transform the media landscape out of all recognition.

But before looking at the big-league changes, it might be worth considering a few of the murkier prospects for the sector which, while less dramatic, could have profound implications for many companies.

There will be, for instance, moves toward a wholesale reform of advertising sales at ITV, as the big companies which control the commercial market for Channel 3 seek an end to the controversial "average station price" currently used to sell advertising time.

The preferred option is something like "spot" pricing, where an advertiser pays a premium to get its message into a specific time slot. The change might be worth as much as £100m more a year for ITV, a prospect that most investors have not yet factored in.

But there are also going to be negative changes for ITV, if not in 1997 then in 1998, when the Government will begin to phase out the controversial payments made by Channel 4 to ITV under the so-called "safety net" arrangements. These are worth about £90m this year.

Some ITV companies might lessen the blow by seeking to negotiate lower licence fee payments to the Treasury, which

they have a right to do from the end of 1997.

Still on TV, Channel 4 could find itself under pressure this coming year. Privatisation may have been put off, following a successful campaign by the chief executive, Michael Grade, to extend the public service mandate of the fourth channel. But there will be further questions about "public service" if Mr Grade continues to spend his hundreds of millions of pounds in advertising money on buying yet more Hollywood sitcoms and series.

But the immediate threat to Channel 4 (and ITV for that matter) is the launch of Britain's last "free" television service, Channel 5, which is expected to be on air by the end of March. The new channel will cost its backers pots of money – at least £180m just to return millions of VCRs up and down the country, a condition of the licence – but it will pay back in spades. With a potential audience of 80 per cent of UK homes, and nearer 90 per cent when you count households able to receive the signal via cable or satellite, Channel 5 will be a near-national service. It will probably lead to a growth in the overall advertising pie, but a large part of its estimated revenues will be poached from Channels 3 and 4. At the very

least, that will put some downward pressure on the wildly inflated prices being charged per minute for commercial advertising, which rose by about 10 per cent (7 per cent in real terms) in 1996.

Meanwhile, consolidation of ITV will be on the agenda, even if the speed (or slowness) with which it occurs could surprise people. Yorkshire-Tyne Tees (to Granada), HTV (to United News & Media) and Grampian (to Scottish Television) are the most likely acquisitions. But in each case, the buyers don't like the high prices they would have to pay, and could decide to wait until much later to pounce.

The upshot, in any event, will be an ITV sector dominated by just two or three companies, able for the first time to present a common front as a truly national network. The implications for the current structure of ITV, with its federal vocation and its much-maligned Network Centre, will be radical. Indeed, there may not be a Network Centre at all, if some of the more reform-minded of the ITV barons get their way.

A general reform of ITV won't come a moment too soon, given the huge challenges that the launch of digital television will present. BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite service, wants to introduce 200 channels

of TV programming and interactive services by the end of 1997. Digital terrestrial television will come a year later, while cable hasn't yet made up its collective mind. The huge fragmentation of the marketplace is bound to hurt traditional broadcasters, unless they themselves manage to secure a role in the digital age. So far, the only ITV companies that appear to be serious about digital are Michael Green's Carlton (which is bidding for a multiplex

licence to operate a digital terrestrial service) and Granada, which has formed a joint venture with BSkyB to launch pay-TV channels.

To make matters more complicated for the commercial players, the BBC has rushed headlong into the digital age, having negotiated a joint venture agreement with US-controlled Flextech to launch pay-TV channels. These will compete directly with the programmes of commercial broad-

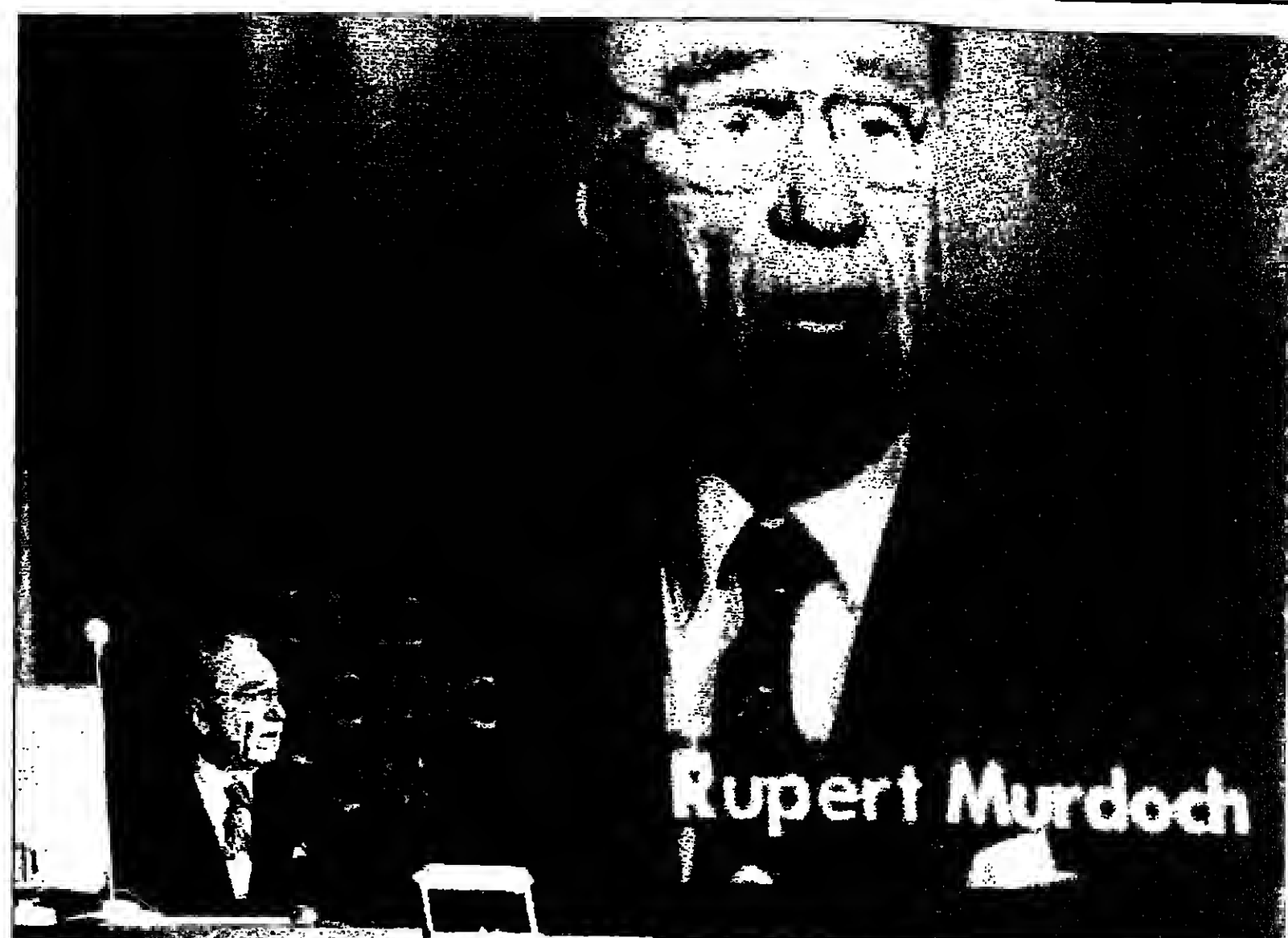
casters, and could lead the digital field. After all, the BBC, despite its reputation for bureaucratic sclerosis, makes the best TV programming in Britain – and crucial in a crowded marketplace – has the best-known brand.

Elsewhere in the media, you can expect a few special situations to develop. Pearson will be in the news, as it struggles to agree a new strategy that could see a mammoth corporate restructuring. Newspaper com-

panies will reap the benefits of lower newspaper prices, unless they decide to add new sections to the already growing products that thump on coffee tables of a Saturday or Sunday. Of the main newspaper groups, both United News & Media and Mirror Group (which owns 46 per cent of *The Independent*) should see operating margins improve.

EMI, the music arm of the now demerged Thorn-EMI, is bound to be the target of a bid,

and probably an agreed one. Favourites include MCA, the film and music giant controlled by drinks company Seagram, and the perennial predators Disney and Bertelsmann. Without a doubt, the media business, which has outperformed most other industries in the past five years, is set for another year of above-average growth. The uncertainties are of course, but it would be no had thing to stay over-weighted.



Thinking big: Rupert Murdoch wants to introduce 200 channels of TV programming by the end of 1997

Photograph: Reuters

Focus on good quality shares and you won't go too far wrong

The maturity of the current bull market in equities was brought home on New Year's Eve when a British Gas engineer, a proponent of nothing, least of all the heating he had come to fix, began expounding his investment philosophy. His thoughts were a timely reminder of the old adage about shoe-shine boys on Wall Street – when the gas man cometh with share tips a crash must surely be around the corner.

His enthusiasm for shares brought to mind another, no doubt apocryphal, tale from 1929 when a lift-boy at JP Morgan plucked up the courage to ask the great man himself what he thought the market would do that day. "It will fluctuate, boy, it will fluctuate," was the banker's considered response.

Morgan's message was that a proper investor, as opposed to the speculator he rightly assumed the boy had become, tried not to worry about the state of the stock market but to focus on good quality individual shares. Anyone who lived through the bear market of the early 1970s, however, knows that not even the best shares can shrug off a determined sell-off. Between the spring of 1972 and the end of 1974, the stock market lost almost three quarters of its value, so it is no wonder at the end of a year in which the Dow Jones index rose by 27 per cent, dragging the London market up on its coat-tails, that it is not just gas engineers spinning out their overtime who fret about the direction of the market in 1997.

STOCK MARKETS

by Tom Stevenson

To put things in perspective, if the London market were to stage a re-run of the early 1970s, the FTSE 100 index, which closed 1996 at a record high of 4118.5, would bottom out shortly before the millennium celebrations at a low of 1,112.0. If bull markets are said to climb a wall of worry, they don't get much steeper than that.

In an election year when the first change of government in 18 years looks probable, with investors struggling to acclimatise themselves to an economy which threatens to have discovered steady growth without inflation, and with stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic flirting with record highs, it is no surprise that the City is sharply divided on the future direction of share prices.

The bear argument is essentially this: Wall Street is grossly overvalued on a number of measures – according to one, the aggregate value of stock market quoted companies is now for the first time ever greater than the total US gross domestic product. As a result, the Dow will almost certainly experience a sharp correction sometime soon and, while London is not so pricey on fundamental measures, the two markets fortunes are so closely entwined that a fall in the US will inevitably spill over here.

Talk to Smith New Court's Andrew Smithers, one of the Square Mile's doziest Jeremiahs, and he will paint you a convincing apocalyptic vision of an overheating UK economy, fuelled by the failure of Kenneth Clarke in at least the last two Budgets to raise taxes or cut spending. Fiscal and monetary policy are out of balance, he says, and interest rates will have to rise to make good the shortfall. That will prick the economic bubble, sterling will fall, and the door will open for Britain's old enemy stagflation. The market will end the year well below its current level.

The problem with that sort of view, apart from the fact that for most of the past 75 years it has been wrong, is that it doesn't sell shares. No surprise then that Mr Smithers, and his bearish co-

horters in the fund management business like PDFM's Tony Dye, are the exception rather than the rule. For the rest of the City, a watered down version of the bullish line taken by NatWest's Bob Semple is the favoured safe option.

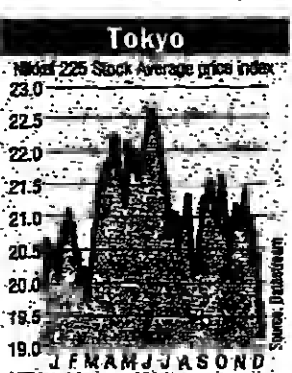
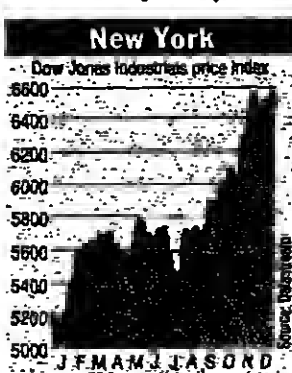
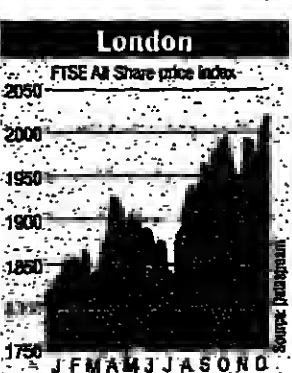
Mr Semple's view is that an incoming Labour government will inherit an economic environment many of us thought we would never see in our lifetimes: solid economic growth, low inflation, falling unemployment and the external account in broad balance. Gordon Brown's first budget will set a prudent fiscal policy (with one eye on keeping Maastricht options open) and an aggressive upward move in interest rates to 7 per cent will take the edge off consumer spending.

That should ensure a longer-lived economic cycle, inflation will fall back towards the Government's 2.5 per cent target in the second half of the year and gilt yields will fall. The equity market, already underpinned by

continued strong earnings and dividend growth, will look increasingly cheap and large amounts of institutional cash sitting on the sidelines will push the market to new highs, possibly 4,600 by year-end.

The truth probably lies somewhere between the Semple and Smithers scenarios and we would expect the FTSE 100 to close 1997 at around 4,300 and the Dow Jones index, driven by rising earnings and a maintained rating, at close to 7000. The Nikkei, which has threatened recovery for four years now, will have another indifferent 12 months.

Consumer stocks will continue to benefit from rising high street spending, benefiting retailers, leisure companies and the brewers. Growth stocks will struggle to repeat the last two buoyant years and high yielders, the market's dogs during that time, will have their day. The gas man will still be reading the *Investor Chronicle* and the market will still be fluctuating, boy.



Feel-good consumers exude a glow

1996 was the year when retailers finally began to believe in a consumer recovery. High street spending was boosted by lower interest rates and a housing market which started to show signs of a revival. If anything 1997 should be even better.

Consumer spending is still growing and should be buoyed yet further by windfall gains from the Halifax and Woolwich Building Society flotations.

The forecast 7-8 per cent increase in house prices this year will boost not just home furnishings and DIY retailers but the whole sector. A feel-good factor of sorts will cast a warmer glow.

1997 also promises to be a year of corporate activity in retailing. The mail order market is one that is ripe for shake-up. With Sainsbury's mail order business likely to be sold to Littlewoods, a new era is already dawning.

But with Great Universal

RETAILING

by Nigel Cope

Stores under more dynamic management and Burton moving into the sector with the Innovations and Racing Green acquisitions the sector is already looking more interesting than it has done for years.

Also look out for a mail order move by Marks & Spencer. Britain's leading retailer already has a housewares catalogue. More are likely to follow. Top of the list for corporate action is the rambling Sears group which had an accident-prone 1996 which chief executive Liam Strong would probably sooner forget.

For Sears, and Mr Strong in particular, 1997 is a crunch year. With Freemans up for sale Sears looks more and more like a break-up candidate. Architect of the re-structure is likely to be

Mr Strong himself who has found his position under threat. Sears could be split up into a series of smaller businesses with the highly successful Selfridges department store as a stand-alone business with healthy expansion prospects in other major cities. The women'swear chains which include Wallis and Miss Selfridge could form another group. If Sears' Christmas trading statement is unimpressive the clamour for a re-structure, or new management, will grow.

This year is also judgement time for another one of last year's losers – House of Fraser, the department store group. The new management under John Coleman will be given a period of grace to settle in and effect a turnaround. But if the

long-awaited recovery is not forthcoming then the predators could move in.

The supermarket sector looks set for another fascinating year. 1996 was characterised by cut throat competition as Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury all profited at Sainsbury's expense. This year promises to see no let-up in the competition. But there is the added twist that all four of the big groups will be operating under new management. One question is how Asda will fare this year as Archie Norman takes a less prominent role.

But the bigger question is this – will 1997 see a Sainsbury renaissance? After a year on the ropes Sainsbury's needs a good run to claw back ground lost to Tesco. More details on the Sainsbury's Bank will be available this month and this could prove a key development as Sainsbury's attempts to re-claim the marketing initiative after a year during which it always

looked to be following. Sainsbury's may need one of its rivals to slip up to really make headway but with so many strengths – including its brand name – the prospects of a turnaround look promising.

Indeed brands will be a key issue again this year. The high street and the supermarket sector are gradually polarising between the winners which have strong brand names and the rest, which do not. Next, Dixons, Argos and John Lewis are just some of the retailers whose brand strength has enabled them to develop market leading positions. The gap between them and the secondary retail players will continue to widen.

Finally, electronic shopping will make more progress this year. A new standard on the encryption of credit card numbers will make Internet transactions more secure and remove a major stumbling block to acceptance of the new medium.

0990 29 29 29

Make flying with easyJet your New Year's resolution

Daily Scheduled Services

4 x Glasgow	£29
4 x Edinburgh	£29
3 x Aberdeen	£29
1 x Inverness	£29
3 x Amsterdam	£35
1 x Nice	£49
1 x Barcelona	£49

easyJet

Call 0990 29 29 29 anytime



Photograph: Robert Hallam

Before the east wind intervened, the feature race at Sandown tomorrow was to be the chase named in memory of Peter Cazalet, trainer to royalty in the immediate post-War years and a man who might be slightly perplexed by the modern way of preparing racehorses. What with equine swimming pools, all-weather gallops, trachea washes and blood counts, it is sometimes difficult to tell where the training duties end and those of the scientist begin.

Yet one old-fashioned virtue can still prove invaluable in

these hi-tech times – the ability to improvise. The main gallop on the farm in Cornwall where Walter Dennis prepares Coome Hill, the Hennessy Gold Cup winner, is currently as solid as Alaskan permafrost, but while many of Lambourn's leading names are forced to leave their string in their boxes, Dennis keeps his stable star on the boil thanks to some unseasonal trips to the beach at Bude.

Coome Hill is not the first racehorse to benefit from exercising on the beach. Red Rum and, more recently, Nor-

ton's Coin enjoyed regular gallops along the strand, and the parallel between Coome Hill and the 1990 Gold Cup winners is particularly striking. Like Sirrell Griffiths, 56-year-old Dennis is a farmer who trains a small stable of horses as a sideline. Give him a good one, however, and he will prepare it with as much care and talent as any of his better-known peers.

"The beach isn't ideal," Dennis, who like Griffiths takes a personal charge of his best horse at work, said yesterday, "but at least you can keep them

Greg Wood on the Red Rum route

moving. The horses enjoy it; the only problem is that the sand is quite firm and if you go too quick, you can jar them up. So we go at just below half-pace to keep them right."

The Midway/Cazale Chase at Sandown had long been planned as Coome Hill's next stopping point on the path to the Gold Cup at Cheltenham in March, and a valuable race in its own right for which the

gelding might well have been favourite, but Dennis is philosophical about losing it to the elements.

"It might not be a bad thing, the trainer said. "I think Coome Hill's ideal trip is three and a quarter miles, though Jamie [Osborne] seems to think he'd do the job [over another three furlongs] easily enough. But it was a race which came at just the right time for him, and I'd

ally he'd want a couple more before Cheltenham. We'll just have to keep our options open and hope we can find them."

Dennis's attempt to become the second farmer-trainer in recent memory to win the Gold Cup will differ from Sirred Griffiths's in one respect at least. Norton's Coin, as anyone who backed him will not need reminding, started at 100-1 while Coome Hill is already a single-figure odds with some bookies for the chasing championship.

"Someone must have had a

fair old het on him," the trainer said, "because Coral has brought him back to 9-1. I'm a bit surprised he's at those odds, but I suppose the way he rode the Hennessy caught the attention. He stayed on terrifically from the last and he's the sort of horse who finds a lot off the bridle. He's such a well-mannered horse, and if you give him a crack, he'll quicken up."

Coombe Hill's three victories this season have demonstrated Dennis's talents as a trainer, but as he admits, "We give priority to the farm because that's where

"We could put one in, but take away Coome Hill and I might not need it any more," Dennis says. "No, I don't think I'll be investing in one of those for now." Peter Cazalet, you suspect, would thoroughly approve.

Even the harshest critics of the British Horseracing Board should be able to find little to complain about regarding the way in which racing's ruling body has coped with the cold snap, writes **John Cobb**. The board's willingness to restage important races and the addition of standby all-weather cards are welcome developments, as is the scheduling of extra jumps meetings, a move which was announced yesterday.

An extra seven cards have been added to the National Hunt programme as part of a package of relief designed to ease the impact of the spiralling list of fixture abandon-

North and three in the Midlands, will be staged between 14 and 28 January, the first of them at Leicester. But with the freeze likely to continue into next week more meetings may yet be programmed.

The BHB's racing director,

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Absolute Magic
(Southwell 1.00)
NB: Jay-Owe-Two
(Southwell 2.30)

Paul Greeves, said: "Last season we had a dreadful time from Boxing Day to New Year but this time the cold weather

DRAW ADVANTAGE: None.
 • Fiberglass saddle; left-hand shirr, or
 • 100% cotton saddle cloth.
MISSION: Club 512; Catterails 53 (0/0)
 completed under 16s (free). **CAR PARK:**

SIS **RACING**
COUNCIL

• **LEADING TRAINERS WITH WINNERS**
 none gives a success ratio of 11.5% and 4%
 — 40 winners, 190 runners, 21.1%, 4.3%
 — 11 winners, 118 runners, 9.3%, 7.8%

• **LEADING JOCKEYS:** J. Weaver, 4%
 — 41 winners, 477 rides, 8.6%, 32.2%
 — 343.81; D. MacGillivray — 31 winners

• **RIDERS' FIRST THREE SEVEN FIVE**
 won 10,000, 100 and 250 miles, 100
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS
 won here on Friday.

LONG-DISTANCE BOWNERS: Cate Byers
 (12-0) and 196 miles and 250 miles, 100
 (12-0) net 196 miles and 250 miles, 100

1.00 **LEICESTERSHIRE CLUB**
 1st Penalty Value £2.00

1. 505135 JOSEPH'S MAGIC (42) (0) (4s)
 2. 125200 ASBURY WAVE (42) (0) (4s)
 3. 125200 ASBURY WAVE (42) (0) (4s)

FREE STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added
 12.54
 1. *Bezzant* 7 *Hoggis* 7 *9* *20* *21* *22* *23* *24* *25* *26* *27* *28* *29* *30* *31* *32* *33* *34* *35* *36* *37* *38* *39* *40* *41* *42* *43* *44* *45* *46* *47* *48* *49* *50* *51* *52* *53* *54* *55* *56* *57* *58* *59* *60* *61* *62* *63* *64* *65* *66* *67* *68* *69* *70* *71* *72* *73* *74* *75* *76* *77* *78* *79* *80* *81* *82* *83* *84* *85* *86* *87* *88* *89* *90* *91* *92* *93* *94* *95* *96* *97* *98* *99* *100* *101* *102* *103* *104* *105* *106* *107* *108* *109* *110* *111* *112* *113* *114* *115* *116* *117* *118* *119* *120* *121* *122* *123* *124* *125* *126* *127* *128* *129* *130* *131* *132* *133* *134* *135* *136* *137* *138* *139* *140* *141* *142* *143* *144* *145* *146* *147* *148* *149* *150* *151* *152* *153* *154* *155* *156* *157* *158* *159* *160* *161* *162* *163* *164* *165* *166* *167* *168* *169* *170* *171* *172* *173* *174* *175* *176* *177* *178* *179* *180* *181* *182* *183* *184* *185* *186* *187* *188* *189* *190* *191* *192* *193* *194* *195* *196* *197* *198* *199* *200* *201* *202* *203* *204* *205* *206* *207* *208* *209* *210* *211* *212* *213* *214* *215* *216* *217* *218* *219* *220* *221* *222* *223* *224* *225* *226* *227* *228* *229* *230* *231* *232* *233* *234* *235* *236* *237* *238* *239* *240* *241* *242* *243* *244* *245* *246* *247* *248* *249* *250* *251* *252* *253* *254* *255* *256* *257* *258* *259* *260* *261* *262* *263* *264* *265* *266* *267* *268* *269* *270* *271* *272* *273* *274* *275* *276* *277* *278* *279* *280* *281* *282* *283* *284* *285* *286* *287* *288* *289* *290* *291* *292* *293* *294* *295* *296* *297* *298* *299* *300* *301* *302* *303* *304* *305* *306* *307* *308* *309* *310* *311* *312* *313* *314* *315* *316* *317* *318* *319* *320* *321* *322* *323* *324* *325* *326* *327* *328* *329* *330* *331* *332* *333* *334* *335* *336* *337* *338* *339* *340* *341* *342* *343* *344* *345* *346* *347* *348* *349* *350* *351* *352* *353* *354* *355* *356* *357* *358* *359* *360* *361* *362* *363* *364* *365* *366* *367* *368* *369* *370* *371* *372* *373* *374* *375* *376* *377* *378* *379* *380* *381* *382* *383* *384* *385* *386* *387* *388* *389* *390* *391* *392* *393* *394* *395* *396* *397* *398* *399* *400* *401* *402* *403* *404* *405* *406* *407* *408* *409* *410* *411* *412* *413* *414* *415* *416* *417* *418* *419* *420* *421* *422* *423* *424* *425* *426* *427* *428* *429* *430* *431* *432* *433* *434* *435* *436* *437* *438* *439* *440* *441* *442* *443* *444* *445* *446* *447* *448* *449* *450* *451* *452* *453* *454* *455* *456* *457* *458* *459* *460* *461* *462* *463* *464* *465* *466* *467* *468* *469* *470* *471* *472* *473* *474* *475* *47*

2.00 **DERBYSHIRE MAIDEN**
1m 4f Penalty Value 5

1	60540	RAFFLES ROOSTER (B) (M)	Alert A
2	00030	CALIFORNIA (B)	Christopher Speed
3	45000	BALLET DE COEUR (L) (M)	and J
4	45000	NOTIONAL (B)	John M. & J.
5	42002	PARADISE (F) (M)	Providence I
6	00000	ACERUS DULCE (G)	George H. and
7	04040	MUSTANG DANCE (G)	Ray Speed
8	00000	WINDMILL (B)	John M. & J.
9	00000	BLURD (F)	Don Morris M. & J.
10	05000	SWINDLE PILL (F)	Andrew C.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Maamur is proving mysteriously popular in betting on the Cheltenham Gold Cup. The Tim Forster-trained chaser, cut in price by both Ladbrokes and William Hill on Wednesday, had his odds chopped yesterday from 33-1 to 25-1 by the race sponsor, the Tote.

Maamur has not run since his win in the Ritz Club Chase at last year's Cheltenham Festival and holds no imminent en-

agements. His stable has denied knowledge of a gamble on the nine-year-old and reportedly will not return him to action until the going softens.

Ground conditions are also proving a problem for Mary Reveley as she attempts to saddle three challengers for the Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown tomorrow week. Express Gift, Penny A Day and Executive Penny are all in line for the

1.30 LINCOLNSHIRE AMATEUR £3,300 added 1st Prize

1 0000-2-0
2 6001-1-0
3 002-2-3
4 030-2-6
5 010-1-2

AWESOME VENTURE (2) (32) (Mach)
TWIN GREYS (4) (5) (32) (Mach)
DESIGNER HAVEN (5) (5) (32) (Mach)
RACING BOY (7) (32) (Four Jays)
MONTGOMERY (23) (5) (16) (5 Shot)

[illegible][illegible]

my handcap here on his first run last year
 and Lucy Tufty at Folestone's suggests he is not
 Selection: SHEPHERD'S REST
 3,355
 1. W. Walker 9.8 17ed
 2. Aldrichman Park Racing VI F. Harkin 8.7
 3. Jane 9.5
 4. Corriedale C. Allen 9.3
 5. Jane 9.5
 6. Jane 9.5
 7. Jane 9.5
 8. Jane 9.5
 9. Jane 9.5
 10. Jane 9.5
 11. Jane 9.5
 12. Jane 9.5
 13. Jane 9.5
 14. Jane 9.5
 15. Jane 9.5
 16. Jane 9.5
 17. Jane 9.5
 18. Jane 9.5
 19. Jane 9.5
 20. Jane 9.5
 21. Jane 9.5
 22. Jane 9.5
 23. Jane 9.5
 24. Jane 9.5
 25. Jane 9.5
 26. Jane 9.5
 27. Jane 9.5
 28. Jane 9.5
 29. Jane 9.5
 30. Jane 9.5
 31. Jane 9.5
 32. Jane 9.5
 33. Jane 9.5
 34. Jane 9.5
 35. Jane 9.5
 36. Jane 9.5
 37. Jane 9.5
 38. Jane 9.5
 39. Jane 9.5
 40. Jane 9.5
 41. Jane 9.5
 42. Jane 9.5
 43. Jane 9.5
 44. Jane 9.5
 45. Jane 9.5
 46. Jane 9.5
 47. Jane 9.5
 48. Jane 9.5
 49. Jane 9.5
 50. Jane 9.5
 51. Jane 9.5
 52. Jane 9.5
 53. Jane 9.5
 54. Jane 9.5
 55. Jane 9.5
 56. Jane 9.5
 57. Jane 9.5
 58. Jane 9.5
 59. Jane 9.5
 60. Jane 9.5
 61. Jane 9.5
 62. Jane 9.5
 63. Jane 9.5
 64. Jane 9.5
 65. Jane 9.5
 66. Jane 9.5
 67. Jane 9.5
 68. Jane 9.5
 69. Jane 9.5
 70. Jane 9.5
 71. Jane 9.5
 72. Jane 9.5
 73. Jane 9.5
 74. Jane 9.5
 75. Jane 9.5
 76. Jane 9.5
 77. Jane 9.5
 78. Jane 9.5
 79. Jane 9.5
 80. Jane 9.5
 81. Jane 9.5
 82. Jane 9.5
 83. Jane 9.5
 84. Jane 9.5
 85. Jane 9.5
 86. Jane 9.5
 87. Jane 9.5
 88. Jane 9.5
 89. Jane 9.5
 90. Jane 9.5
 91. Jane 9.5
 92. Jane 9.5
 93. Jane 9.5
 94. Jane 9.5
 95. Jane 9.5
 96. Jane 9.5
 97. Jane 9.5
 98. Jane 9.5
 99. Jane 9.5
 100. Jane 9.5
 101. Jane 9.5
 102. Jane 9.5
 103. Jane 9.5
 104. Jane 9.5
 105. Jane 9.5
 106. Jane 9.5
 107. Jane 9.5
 108. Jane 9.5
 109. Jane 9.5
 110. Jane 9.5
 111. Jane 9.5
 112. Jane 9.5
 113. Jane 9.5
 114. Jane 9.5
 115. Jane 9.5
 116. Jane 9.5
 117. Jane 9.5
 118. Jane 9.5
 119. Jane 9.5
 120. Jane 9.5
 121. Jane 9.5
 122. Jane 9.5
 123. Jane 9.5
 124. Jane 9.5
 125. Jane 9.5
 126. Jane 9.5
 127. Jane 9.5
 128. Jane 9.5
 129. Jane 9.5
 130. Jane 9.5
 131. Jane 9.5
 132. Jane 9.5
 133. Jane 9.5
 134. Jane 9.5
 135. Jane 9.5
 136. Jane 9.5
 137. Jane 9.5
 138. Jane 9.5
 139. Jane 9.5
 140. Jane 9.5
 141. Jane 9.5
 142. Jane 9.5
 143. Jane 9.5
 144. Jane 9.5
 145. Jane 9.5
 146. Jane 9.5
 147. Jane 9.5
 148. Jane 9.5
 149. Jane 9.5
 150. Jane 9.5
 151. Jane 9.5
 152. Jane 9.5
 153. Jane 9.5
 154. Jane 9.5
 155. Jane 9.5
 156. Jane 9.5
 157. Jane 9.5
 158. Jane 9.5
 159. Jane 9.5
 160. Jane 9.5
 161. Jane 9.5
 162. Jane 9.5
 163. Jane 9.5
 164. Jane 9.5
 165. Jane 9.5
 166. Jane 9.5
 167. Jane 9.5
 168. Jane 9.5
 169. Jane 9.5
 170. Jane 9.5
 171. Jane 9.5
 172. Jane 9.5
 173. Jane 9.5
 174. Jane 9.5
 175. Jane 9.5
 176. Jane 9.5
 177. Jane 9.5
 178. Jane 9.5
 179. Jane 9.5
 180. Jane 9.5
 181. Jane 9.5
 182. Jane 9.5
 183. Jane 9.5
 184. Jane 9.5
 185. Jane 9.5
 186. Jane 9.5
 187. Jane 9.5
 188. Jane 9.5
 189. Jane 9.5
 190. Jane 9.5
 191. Jane 9.5
 192. Jane 9.5
 193. Jane 9.5
 194. Jane 9.5
 195. Jane 9.5
 196. Jane 9.5
 197. Jane 9.5
 198. Jane 9.5
 199. Jane 9.5
 200. Jane 9.5
 201. Jane 9.5
 202. Jane 9.5
 203. Jane 9.5
 204. Jane 9.5
 205. Jane 9.5
 206. Jane 9.5
 207. Jane 9.5
 208. Jane 9.5
 209. Jane 9.5
 210. Jane 9.5
 211. Jane 9.5
 212. Jane 9.5
 213. Jane 9.5
 214. Jane 9.5
 215. Jane 9.5
 216. Jane 9.5
 217. Jane 9.5
 218. Jane 9.5
 219. Jane 9.5
 220. Jane 9.5
 221. Jane 9.5
 222. Jane 9.5
 223. Jane 9.5
 224. Jane 9.5
 225. Jane 9.5
 226. Jane 9.5
 227. Jane 9.5
 228. Jane 9.5
 229. Jane 9.5
 230. Jane 9.5
 231. Jane 9.5
 232. Jane 9.5
 233. Jane 9.5
 234. Jane 9.5
 235. Jane 9.5
 236. Jane 9.5
 237. Jane 9.5
 238. Jane 9.5
 239. Jane 9.5
 240. Jane 9.5
 241. Jane 9.5
 242. Jane 9.5
 243. Jane 9.5
 244. Jane 9.5
 245. Jane 9.5
 246. Jane 9.5
 247. Jane 9.5
 248. Jane 9.5
 249. Jane 9.5
 250. Jane 9.5
 251. Jane 9.5
 252. Jane 9.5
 253. Jane 9.5
 254. Jane 9.5
 255. Jane 9.5
 256. Jane 9.5
 257. Jane 9.5
 258. Jane 9.5
 259. Jane 9.5
 260. Jane 9.5
 261. Jane 9.5
 262. Jane 9.5
 263. Jane 9.5
 264. Jane 9.5
 265. Jane 9.5
 266. Jane 9.5
 267. Jane 9.5
 268. Jane 9.5
 269. Jane 9.5
 270. Jane 9.5
 271. Jane 9.5
 272. Jane 9.5
 273. Jane 9.5
 274. Jane 9.5
 275. Jane 9.5
 276. Jane 9.5
 277. Jane 9.5
 278. Jane 9.5
 279. Jane 9.5
 280. Jane 9.5
 281. Jane 9.5
 282. Jane 9.5
 283. Jane 9.5
 284. Jane 9.5
 285. Jane 9.5
 286. Jane 9.5
 287. Jane 9.5
 288. Jane 9.5
 289. Jane 9.5
 290. Jane 9.5
 291. Jane 9.5
 292. Jane 9.5
 293. Jane 9.5
 294. Jane 9.5
 295. Jane 9.5

The Q-95 grade offers all runners hope. The Sussex Downs filly who landed a steady ride at Redford on her second start. She has trained in the south and just low-key hand was over the minimum after turf efforts over key to her. Pathina, in a good maiden at Le Place after two runs at Wolverhampton. Three over six last time but she had Hever's and de Capresse's apprentice-ridden weight-burden. She has a chance to make a comeback but has no chance despite the unfavourable terms. The 1000m runner who has been in the first-ed list with Aidan O'Brien then moved to new runs for Kevin McAlwette in a first-year

Express 7a 1b.
Lycha Trench, 6-1. Short Weapon, 6-1. Game Dance

1.13 rpm
GUIDE

could be good value with **COMB DANCING**, a picture when having to be taken to the past early in the opposition from some of the advantages could just be her merit. Her Equilibrium now, so today's seven furlongs might just be the winner on her debut, is now on a further out-let to quicken with Double-0 and Jay-Owe. Half-Dancer might lengthen behind her in fourth when least of eight. Pinta is now the best in her first run for five months and is not a on her best last form, but the weapon is not a in a unique sense from Down Royal. Her debut is in a form of a year, a soft ground

Effervescence landed a hat-trick of wins at Lingfield within a week when getting up in the last stride yesterday.

Richard Hannon's colt got on the winning trail on Boxing Day at the Surrey course. He followed up on Monday and came

back for one more win yesterday, when his apprentice rider, David Griffiths, urged the 4-5 favourite home by a whisker from Eager To Please, with Forgotten Times well back in third. Darryll Holland, who rode the runner-up, was banned for

two days (11 and 13 January) for using his whip with undue frequency.

Simon Dow started his new year off on the right note through a 30-1 double with Misty Cay (5-2 favourite) and Tawnfek (8-1).

1.20: 1. MISTY CAY (A Daly) 5-2 fav.
2. Serenade 9-1: 3. Lily Jacques 5-1. 9
ran. 2. 2. IS Dow, Epsom). Total: £3.20.
£1.30, £2.50, £2.10, DF: £15.90, CSF:
£21.29. Inc: £26.20. The placings remain-
ed unaltered after a stewards' inquiry.

1.50: 1. TAWAFEK (R Perham) 8-1: 2.
Nakhai 5-1: 3. Hazel 12-1. 11 ran. 11-8
fav. Rendra (4th). 1/y, 1/y. (IS Dow, Epsom).
Total: £8.50. £1.60, £2.30, £1.60. DF:

2. **Awesome Power 12-1:** 3. **Bon Gum**
11-4 fax 8 ran. 1/4, 1/4, (W Mur, Lambourn)
Totals: £41.10: £1.10, £2.40, £2.30. DF
£20.30. CSF: £38.02.

2.50: 1. **ULTRA BEET** (J Weaver) 4-1-1
2. **Sharp Imp 7-2:** 3. **Captain Carat** 10-3-
fax 9 ran. 1/4, 1 (P Haslam, Middleham)
Totals: £44.00: £1.10, £1.40, £1.50. DF
£66.73. CSF: £17.75. Incast: £47.34. Tlio
£7.70.

3.20: 1. **EFFERVESCENCE** (D Griffiths)

Gotten Times 16-1; 5. ran, SN Ind, 2. (H. Hannon, East Everleigh). Total: £1.80; £1.10, £2.00. DP: £3.10, CSF: £5.56.
S.50: 1. YET AGAIN (D Holland) 1-2 fms.
2. Premier League 16-1; 3. Pair of Jacks.
14-1; 13 ran. 5, 2 1/2. (Miss Gay Kellaway, Whitcomb). Total: £1.30; £1.10, £3.80, £1.20. DP: £13.90, CSF: £13.67. Incase: £84.04, Trax: £87.70, NR: Fabulous Moto.
Jackpot: £1,775.00.
Placings: £14.30, 4.40, 5.40, 6.40, 7.40, 8.40, 9.40, 10.40, 11.40, 12.40, 13.40, 14.40, 15.40, 16.40, 17.40, 18.40, 19.40, 20.40, 21.40, 22.40, 23.40, 24.40, 25.40, 26.40, 27.40, 28.40, 29.40, 30.40, 31.40, 32.40, 33.40, 34.40, 35.40, 36.40, 37.40, 38.40, 39.40, 40.40, 41.40, 42.40, 43.40, 44.40, 45.40, 46.40, 47.40, 48.40, 49.40, 50.40, 51.40, 52.40, 53.40, 54.40, 55.40, 56.40, 57.40, 58.40, 59.40, 60.40, 61.40, 62.40, 63.40, 64.40, 65.40, 66.40, 67.40, 68.40, 69.40, 70.40, 71.40, 72.40, 73.40, 74.40, 75.40, 76.40, 77.40, 78.40, 79.40, 80.40, 81.40, 82.40, 83.40, 84.40, 85.40, 86.40, 87.40, 88.40, 89.40, 90.40, 91.40, 92.40, 93.40, 94.40, 95.40, 96.40, 97.40, 98.40, 99.40, 100.40, 101.40, 102.40, 103.40, 104.40, 105.40, 106.40, 107.40, 108.40, 109.40, 110.40, 111.40, 112.40, 113.40, 114.40, 115.40, 116.40, 117.40, 118.40, 119.40, 120.40, 121.40, 122.40, 123.40, 124.40, 125.40, 126.40, 127.40, 128.40, 129.40, 130.40, 131.40, 132.40, 133.40, 134.40, 135.40, 136.40, 137.40, 138.40, 139.40, 140.40, 141.40, 142.40, 143.40, 144.40, 145.40, 146.40, 147.40, 148.40, 149.40, 150.40, 151.40, 152.40, 153.40, 154.40, 155.40, 156.40, 157.40, 158.40, 159.40, 160.40, 161.40, 162.40, 163.40, 164.40, 165.40, 166.40, 167.40, 168.40, 169.40, 170.40, 171.40, 172.40, 173.40, 174.40, 175.40, 176.40, 177.40, 178.40, 179.40, 180.40, 181.40, 182.40, 183.40, 184.40, 185.40, 186.40, 187.40, 188.40, 189.40, 190.40, 191.40, 192.40, 193.40, 194.40, 195.40, 196.40, 197.40, 198.40, 199.40, 200.40, 201.40, 202.40, 203.40, 204.40, 205.40, 206.40, 207.40, 208.40, 209.40, 210.40, 211.40, 212.40, 213.40, 214.40, 215.40, 216.40, 217.40, 218.40, 219.40, 220.40, 221.40, 222.40, 223.40, 224.40, 225.40, 226.40, 227.40, 228.40, 229.40, 230.40, 231.40, 232.40, 233.40, 234.40, 235.40, 236.40, 237.40, 238.40, 239.40, 240.40, 241.40, 242.40, 243.40, 244.40, 245.40, 246.40, 247.40, 248.40, 249.40, 250.40, 251.40, 252.40, 253.40, 254.40, 255.40, 256.40, 257.40, 258.40, 259.40, 260.40, 261.40, 262.40, 263.40, 264.40, 265.40, 266.40, 267.40, 268.40, 269.40, 270.40, 271.40, 272.40, 273.40, 274.40, 275.40, 276.40, 277.40, 278.40, 279.40, 280.40, 281.40, 282.40, 283.40, 284.40, 285.40, 286.40, 287.40, 288.40, 289.40, 290.40, 291.40, 292.40, 293.40, 294.40, 295.40, 296.40, 297.40, 298.40, 299.40, 300.40, 301.40, 302.40, 303.40, 304.40, 305.40, 306.40, 307.40, 308.40, 309.40, 310.40, 311.40, 312.40, 313.40, 314.40, 315.40, 316.40, 317.40, 318.40, 319.40, 320.40, 321.40, 322.40, 323.40, 324.40, 325.40, 326.40, 327.40, 328.40, 329.40, 330.40, 331.40, 332.40, 333.40, 334.40, 335.40, 336.40, 337.40, 338.40, 339.40, 340.40, 341.40, 342.40, 343.40, 344.40, 345.40, 346.40, 347.40, 348.40, 349.40, 350.40, 351.40, 352.40, 353.40, 354.40, 355.40, 356.40, 357.40, 358.40, 359.40, 360.40, 361.40, 362.40, 363.40, 364.40, 365.40, 366.40, 367.40, 368.40, 369.40, 370.40, 371.40, 372.40, 373.40, 374.40, 375.40, 376.40, 377.40, 378.40, 379.40, 380.40, 381.40, 382.40, 383.40, 384.40, 385.40, 386.40, 387.40, 388.40, 389.40, 390.40, 391.40, 392.40, 393.40, 394.40, 395.40, 396.40, 397.40, 398.40, 399.40, 400.40, 401.40, 402.40, 403.40, 404.40, 405.40, 406.40, 407.40, 408.40, 409.40, 410.40, 411.40, 412.40, 413.40, 414.40, 415.40, 416.40, 417.40, 418.40, 419.40, 420.40, 421.40, 422.40, 423.40, 424.40, 425.40, 426.40, 427.40, 428.40, 429.40, 430.40, 431.40, 432.40, 433.40, 434.40, 435.40, 436.40, 437.40, 438.40, 439.40, 440.40, 441.40, 442.40, 443.40, 444.40, 445.40, 446.40, 447.40, 448.40, 449.40, 450.40, 451.40, 452.40, 453.40, 454.40, 455.40, 456.40, 457.40, 458.40, 459.40, 460.40, 461.40, 462.40, 463.40, 464.40, 465.40, 466.40, 467.40, 468.40, 469.40, 470.40, 471.40, 472.40, 473.40, 474.40, 475.40, 476.40, 477.40, 478.40, 479.40, 480.40, 481.40, 482.40, 483.40, 484.40, 485.40, 486.40, 487.40, 488.40, 489.40, 490.40, 491.40, 492.40, 493.40, 494.40, 495.40, 496.40, 497.40, 49

2. **Awesome Power 12-1:** 3. **Bon Gum**
11-4 fax 8 ran. 1/4, 1/4, (W Mur, Lambourn)
Totals: £41.10: £1.10, £2.40, £2.30. DF
£20.30. CSF: £38.02.

2.50: 1. **ULTRA BEET** (J Weaver) 4-1-1
2. **Sharp Imp 7-2:** 3. **Captain Carat** 10-3-
fax 9 ran. 1/4, 1 (P Haslam, Middleham)
Totals: £44.00: £1.10, £1.40, £1.50. DF
£66.73. CSF: £17.75. Incast: £47.34. Tlio
£7.70.

3.20: 1. **EFFERVESCENCE** (D Griffiths)

Gotten Times 16-1; 5. ran, SN Ind, 2. (H. Hannon, East Everleigh). Total: £1.80; £1.10, £2.00. DP: £3.10, CSF: £5.56.
S.50: 1. YET AGAIN (D Holland) 1-2 fms.
2. Premier League 16-1; 3. Pair of Jacks.
14-1; 13 ran. 5, 2 1/2. (Miss Gay Kellaway, Whitcomb). Total: £1.30; £1.10, £3.80, £1.20. DP: £13.90, CSF: £13.67. Incase: £84.04, Trax: £87.70, NR: Fabulous Moto.
Jackpot: £1,775.00.
Placings: £14.30, 4.40, 5.40, 6.40, 7.40, 8.40, 9.40, 10.40, 11.40, 12.40, 13.40, 14.40, 15.40, 16.40, 17.40, 18.40, 19.40, 20.40, 21.40, 22.40, 23.40, 24.40, 25.40, 26.40, 27.40, 28.40, 29.40, 30.40, 31.40, 32.40, 33.40, 34.40, 35.40, 36.40, 37.40, 38.40, 39.40, 40.40, 41.40, 42.40, 43.40, 44.40, 45.40, 46.40, 47.40, 48.40, 49.40, 50.40, 51.40, 52.40, 53.40, 54.40, 55.40, 56.40, 57.40, 58.40, 59.40, 60.40, 61.40, 62.40, 63.40, 64.40, 65.40, 66.40, 67.40, 68.40, 69.40, 70.40, 71.40, 72.40, 73.40, 74.40, 75.40, 76.40, 77.40, 78.40, 79.40, 80.40, 81.40, 82.40, 83.40, 84.40, 85.40, 86.40, 87.40, 88.40, 89.40, 90.40, 91.40, 92.40, 93.40, 94.40, 95.40, 96.40, 97.40, 98.40, 99.40, 100.40, 101.40, 102.40, 103.40, 104.40, 105.40, 106.40, 107.40, 108.40, 109.40, 110.40, 111.40, 112.40, 113.40, 114.40, 115.40, 116.40, 117.40, 118.40, 119.40, 120.40, 121.40, 122.40, 123.40, 124.40, 125.40, 126.40, 127.40, 128.40, 129.40, 130.40, 131.40, 132.40, 133.40, 134.40, 135.40, 136.40, 137.40, 138.40, 139.40, 140.40, 141.40, 142.40, 143.40, 144.40, 145.40, 146.40, 147.40, 148.40, 149.40, 150.40, 151.40, 152.40, 153.40, 154.40, 155.40, 156.40, 157.40, 158.40, 159.40, 160.40, 161.40, 162.40, 163.40, 164.40, 165.40, 166.40, 167.40, 168.40, 169.40, 170.40, 171.40, 172.40, 173.40, 174.40, 175.40, 176.40, 177.40, 178.40, 179.40, 180.40, 181.40, 182.40, 183.40, 184.40, 185.40, 186.40, 187.40, 188.40, 189.40, 190.40, 191.40, 192.40, 193.40, 194.40, 195.40, 196.40, 197.40, 198.40, 199.40, 200.40, 201.40, 202.40, 203.40, 204.40, 205.40, 206.40, 207.40, 208.40, 209.40, 210.40, 211.40, 212.40, 213.40, 214.40, 215.40, 216.40, 217.40, 218.40, 219.40, 220.40, 221.40, 222.40, 223.40, 224.40, 225.40, 226.40, 227.40, 228.40, 229.40, 230.40, 231.40, 232.40, 233.40, 234.40, 235.40, 236.40, 237.40, 238.40, 239.40, 240.40, 241.40, 242.40, 243.40, 244.40, 245.40, 246.40, 247.40, 248.40, 249.40, 250.40, 251.40, 252.40, 253.40, 254.40, 255.40, 256.40, 257.40, 258.40, 259.40, 260.40, 261.40, 262.40, 263.40, 264.40, 265.40, 266.40, 267.40, 268.40, 269.40, 270.40, 271.40, 272.40, 273.40, 274.40, 275.40, 276.40, 277.40, 278.40, 279.40, 280.40, 281.40, 282.40, 283.40, 284.40, 285.40, 286.40, 287.40, 288.40, 289.40, 290.40, 291.40, 292.40, 293.40, 294.40, 295.40, 296.40, 297.40, 298.40, 299.40, 300.40, 301.40, 302.40, 303.40, 304.40, 305.40, 306.40, 307.40, 308.40, 309.40, 310.40, 311.40, 312.40, 313.40, 314.40, 315.40, 316.40, 317.40, 318.40, 319.40, 320.40, 321.40, 322.40, 323.40, 324.40, 325.40, 326.40, 327.40, 328.40, 329.40, 330.40, 331.40, 332.40, 333.40, 334.40, 335.40, 336.40, 337.40, 338.40, 339.40, 340.40, 341.40, 342.40, 343.40, 344.40, 345.40, 346.40, 347.40, 348.40, 349.40, 350.40, 351.40, 352.40, 353.40, 354.40, 355.40, 356.40, 357.40, 358.40, 359.40, 360.40, 361.40, 362.40, 363.40, 364.40, 365.40, 366.40, 367.40, 368.40, 369.40, 370.40, 371.40, 372.40, 373.40, 374.40, 375.40, 376.40, 377.40, 378.40, 379.40, 380.40, 381.40, 382.40, 383.40, 384.40, 385.40, 386.40, 387.40, 388.40, 389.40, 390.40, 391.40, 392.40, 393.40, 394.40, 395.40, 396.40, 397.40, 398.40, 399.40, 400.40, 401.40, 402.40, 403.40, 404.40, 405.40, 406.40, 407.40, 408.40, 409.40, 410.40, 411.40, 412.40, 413.40, 414.40, 415.40, 416.40, 417.40, 418.40, 419.40, 420.40, 421.40, 422.40, 423.40, 424.40, 425.40, 426.40, 427.40, 428.40, 429.40, 430.40, 431.40, 432.40, 433.40, 434.40, 435.40, 436.40, 437.40, 438.40, 439.40, 440.40, 441.40, 442.40, 443.40, 444.40, 445.40, 446.40, 447.40, 448.40, 449.40, 450.40, 451.40, 452.40, 453.40, 454.40, 455.40, 456.40, 457.40, 458.40, 459.40, 460.40, 461.40, 462.40, 463.40, 464.40, 465.40, 466.40, 467.40, 468.40, 469.40, 470.40, 471.40, 472.40, 473.40, 474.40, 475.40, 476.40, 477.40, 478.40, 479.40, 480.40, 481.40, 482.40, 483.40, 484.40, 485.40, 486.40, 487.40, 488.40, 489.40, 490.40, 491.40, 492.40, 493.40, 494.40, 495.40, 496.40, 497.40, 49

THE INDEPENDENT
RACING SERVICES
0891 261 +
LIVE COMMENTARIES RESULTS

LINGFIELD	971	981
TOWCESTER	972	982
SEDGEFIELD	973	983
SOUTHWELL	974	984

ALL COURSES RESULTS
0891 261 999

English dogs, English and Irish, T.V. & Sports 5 (RCA-4)

